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A LASS OF DORCHESTER



ANNIE M. BARNES

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NAS

A LASS OF DORCHESTER



ON FLEW HECTOR, SEEMING SCARCELY TO TOUCH THE EARTH.
Page 328.

A LASS OF DORCHESTER

BY

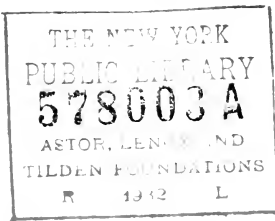
ANNIE M. BARNES

Author of "Little Betty Blew," and "The Laurel
Token"

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK T. MERRILL



12
BOSTON
LEE AND SHEPARD
1904



Published August, 1904

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A L A S S O F D O R C H E S T E R

Herwood Press
BERWICK AND SMITH CO.
Norwood, Mass.
U. S. A.

To
Dr. Henry B. Lee,
PHYSICIAN, FRIEND,
A TRUE AND COURTEOUS GENTLEMAN,
AND
DIRECT DESCENDANT OF ONE OF THE PASTORS OF THE OLD WHITE
MEETING HOUSE AT DORCHESTER, ON THE ASHLEY,
THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED.

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A LASS OF DORCHESTER

CHAPTER I

A HOME-COMING

"ANY glimpse of the *Swallow* yet, Joan?"

"Nay, Sister Dorinda; though but a moment ago I thought I saw something moving just beyond the clump of maples where the river makes the double bend. 'Twas no doubt a bird flitting from limb to limb."

Mistress Dorinda Blew stood up beside her sister, Mistress Joan May, and she, too, leaned forward in the same intent attitude, shading her eyes with her hand.

"I thought our good ship with its precious cargo would have been here two hours ago," said Mrs. Blew again.

"No doubt the tide has been against them," replied Mrs. May, "or the *Swallow* may have encountered a drift of logs. Two of Master Hall's rafts broke loose

from their fastenings only the evening before the last, if you remember. Mayhap they are caught midstream somewhere, and so the *Swallow* must wait for the jam to break."

"Well, God grant no harm has befallen her, for never ship carried more precious cargo. It seems to me she must come safely through, because of the many prayers we have wafted toward her."

"Fear not, sister," said Mrs. May, in deep earnestness. "There has no harm befallen, I am sure. 'Tis but some temporary detention, which our good ship will soon overcome. I expect to see, any moment, the dip of her white wings as she rounds the bend."

"'Tis two years and a half since our little Betty went away," said Mrs. Blew musingly. A mist had come into her eyes, and her tones were tremulous. "How she must have changed in this time! I mean not in heart, for our Betty will ever be the same sweet, loving maid; but 'tis to the change in her appearance I refer. She will have grown taller, her face will have a more womanly expression, and there will be a certain air about her that our Betty did not have when she went away."

"She will not be our little Betty any longer," said Aunt Joan softly, "but in her place, I feel assured, we

shall have as fine a young lass as all Carolina can show."

The mother's eyes glowed.

"Well said, Joan. There are the letters from Boston to acquaint us with her fine progress, even if our own hearts did not tell us how much we may expect of our lass."

"Truly, fortune was kind to decree that our Betty should have the advantage of finishing her education in Boston Town. That was a most generous offer on the part of Cousin Penuel Sumner, to take her into his family and to provide for her as one of his own girls, and assuredly we'll not soon forget it."

"Nay, that we will not, at any time; and I am so pleased that he is to let Anne return with Betty for a long visit to us. Now I can have opportunity to give to Cousin Martha's daughter some of the mothering bestowed upon mine."

By this time a little crowd had collected on the river bank, for it was well known throughout Dorchester township, that on this morning, about eleven of the clock, young Mistress Elizabeth Blew was expected home from Boston Town, whither she had gone to complete her education.

Apart from their sincere liking for the bright-eyed

lass, and the keen desire to see her again, there was also a degree of curiosity and of expectancy moving a number of those who had gathered on the bank to watch for the coming of Captain Gabriel May's good ship, *The Swallow*. Young Mistress Elizabeth Blew had been in Boston Town two years and a half. In that time she would have met many of the old neighbors and friends, and even kindred. She would know all the happenings that had covered that space of time. In short, she would come back laden with news from the old home; for these settlers of the new Dorchester on the Ashley River, in South Carolina, had emigrated from Dorchester, Mass., in 1796, and only about eight years before the year of our story. The ties that bound their hearts to the old Dorchester were still strong.

"I see a sail!" cried young Master Portman suddenly, "and full sure am I that 'tis Captain Gabriel's craft, the *Swallow*. There! see you not for yourselves?" he added, even more eagerly.

Sure enough! while some had gossiped, and others, tired of straining their eyes in one direction, had turned their heads for other views, the slim, graceful form of the *Swallow* had glided well out from behind the clump of maples, and with the stiff breeze swelling her sails,

was coming jauntily, straight in toward the wharf just below the warehouse.

There was a shout from the shore and an answering one from the *Swallow*. Then many hands went into the air, and for that first shout a swelling chorus now, together with words of greeting flung across the fast decreasing distance.

Suddenly a cry rose above all other sounds.

“Gabriel! Captain Gabriel! a royal welcome home to you!”

Yes, there was the big captain himself, standing well forward on the deck of his staunch craft, though the day before she had sailed away from Dorchester township without him. The reason was that Captain Gabriel May himself had been to Boston, both for the purpose of accompanying Mistress Betty Blew home and to attend to some business for Mistress Betty's father, whose brother-in-law he was. The *Swallow* had been sent to Charles Town the day before to meet the travelers who had arrived at that port by the merchant craft, *Charming Susan*.

“There's Betty!” cried little Daniel Blew to his mother. “Look, Beautiful! Oh, I know it is our Betty by the way she holds her head. See, she is beckoning to us, and oh! I do believe now she is wip-

ing her eyes. Why, mother, you don't think she *could* be crying?" As told in a former book, "Little Betty Blew," the Blew children often called their mother "Beautiful," as a pet name.

"Crying for joy," replied his mother, and now she did what Betty had just done; she, too, wiped her eyes.

"It's funny she should be crying when she's coming home," said Daniel.

"Just you go away so long as she has, my Dinkie boy," replied his mother, squeezing his hand, "and see if you, too, won't cry for joy when you are coming back." Daniel had not yet entirely got beyond his childish nick-name of "Dinks."

"'Tis our Betty true enough!" exclaimed Aunt Joan, her eyes fixed upon a slender figure in a dark gray gown so near to Captain Gabriel. "Oh, how tall our lass has grown!" Aunt Joan herself must have been close to tears, for her voice quivered as though she were.

The good ship had no more than come alongside the wharf, which was built some feet out into the stream, when there arose from the direction of the fort the most unearthly din. Surely such pounding and beating, such thumping and rattling had never been heard before in that staid community.

“ Oh, what *can* it be? ” cried Mistress Anne Sumner in affright, as she caught hold of her cousin, and with a grip that made Betty wince. “ Is it—is it Indians? and are they coming to kill us? ”

“ Nay, lass,” spoke Captain Gabriel quickly; “ have no fear ’tis Indians. Our savage foes would not **herald** their approach by such noises. Their way is to creep upon us unawares.” Then he turned with a smile to Betty. “ ’Tis Master Charles, your brother. I forgot to tell you that since your departure he has been appointed drummer, and mightily filled he is with the importance of it. Methinks he has borne it in mind for some time to give you this demonstration on your return. No doubt he has made great preparations for it, for ’tis not only his own thumping I detect, but there go the sounds of two Indians with the tom-toms! ”

Betty threw up her chin with a quick, ringing laugh. There was a gleam, too, of merriment in her eyes.

“ Oh, that is so like Charles,” she said; then as her eyes softened, “ The dear lad, I do so long to give him a big, big hug.”

There was no time now for further words. The *Swallow* had been made fast and the plank was out.

With a glad cry Betty moved as though to spring

along it and into the arms that were just aching to receive her. But with swift unselfishness the impulse was conquered, and Betty stepped backward, saying to Captain Gabriel :

“ ’Tis Anne who must go first; and pray, Captain Gabriel, do not fail to give her the support of your good strong hand. I’m thinking her head may yet be very unsteady after that fright about the Indians.”

These words Betty said looking mischievously at Anne, who threw up her hands in the same mischievous spirit as though to support her tottering head.

All this while, though she tried to pass over in a light manner her holding back for Anne to precede her, Betty’s heart was beating tumultuously and her eyes were like stars.

As last Betty was free to go. There was a rush of feet along the plank. They seemed scarcely to touch it. That their owner did not miss her balance and go into the water was entirely due to the fact that she had one of the steadiest heads ever put on young shoulders. In her movements, too, was all the swift grace of a bird’s. It was rare that Betty’s feet stumbled, or that they struck unwarily any object along the path.

She was in the arms at last! How tightly they held her, as though they would never let her go again!

"Oh, mother," sobbed Betty; "there was many a day that was like night and all because you were not there!"

"But now that you are home again, dear heart," replied her mother, answering the smile she saw through the tears, "all the nights will be as days, for the glow will abide in our hearts."

All her loved ones were there to greet her, all save one, and he was expected every moment.

"'Twas my little Betty who went away," said Aunt Joan, as she kissed again and again the soft cheek; "I hardly know this tall Mistress Betty who has come back to me with head up to the level of my own."

"But 'tis your little Betty all the same, Aunt Joan; yea, in many ways. You'll soon find that out, dear aunt. I am your little girl still, though I am so tall. You'll see that plainly the first time you make ginger cookies." At these words Betty's eyes twinkled merrily.

"I am one who does not object to taking this fine, tall lass in place of the little maid who went away," said a clear, deep voice at this moment.

Turning, she saw her brother, Edward, with hands extended.

He gave her a warm embrace, then held her at arm's length, studying her face intently.

"But after all," he said with satisfaction, "whether little or grown tall, 'tis our same sweet Betty. On this we can rely. The face and the eyes tell us so, and there is the heart still to speak for itself. But truly, my maid, you have a wondrous finish."

He held her off again, and this time looked at her admiringly.

"You have improved yourself, Edward," Betty said, regarding him with pleased eyes.

He was the oldest child of the Blews, and was now a young man of twenty-four. He had a bright and winning face, thick, curling hair of a glossy brown, and deep lustrous eyes of gray, with long, curling lashes, very much like Betty's own, and like hers, too, could sparkle with merriment. He had had a sad history, having been stolen from his parents when very young by the Indians, and restored to them only seven years before, when our Betty was a little maid of nine.

"I see there's another young lady now in the Blew family," said Caroline, as she gave the rosy mouth a loving kiss and pinched Betty's cheek to make it redder still. "I hope you brought some of the fashions with

you from Boston Town, Betty," she added, her eyes kindling expectantly.

Yes, they were all there to meet Betty, all but her father. He had gone to one of the Indian towns on a government mission, but had fully expected to be back in time to greet his Betty.

From Charles came the noisest greeting. This was Charles's way. He never thought anything could be done in a grand way unless there was a great deal of show and bluster. His spirits fairly swept him away sometimes. He was bubbling over with the joy of living. He came running from the fort now as though in truth the Indians were at his very heels, and shouting Betty's name at every bound.

"Wasn't it grand, though?" he asked, as he had her about the neck and was hugging her so she could scarcely breathe.

"Wasn't what grand?" she repeated, as soon as she could get her voice, but even now she had to gasp for breath.

"Why, the salute I gave you with the drum and tom-toms! I tell you, Mistress Betty, I made old Chicomola and Yin-hon beat, beat away till the perspiration came. 'Tis the first time ever I saw an Indian work till that happened," and Charles laughed boisterously.

"Oh, Charles, truly you should not have done that. Poor Chi-co-la particularly is not strong."

"Well, he was glad to do it, I can tell you. That Indian, Betty, if he thought it was for you, would stand on his head till every drop of blood went out of his body."

"Oh, I wouldn't ever want him to do such a thing as that!" declared Betty, shocked at the thought. Yet she could not help but be pleased by the assurance of Chi-co-la's devotion. And now here was Chi-co-la himself to give her evidence of it in the brightening of the eyes as she ran forward to greet him, in the emotion he showed, rare in one of his race, as she addressed him.

"Little white doe has come back again!" he said. "Good! good!" and stood and looked and looked at her till his eyes glistened.

"Oh, Chi-co-la, it *is* good to be at home again!" Betty agreed, as she stood with his hand in hers and patted it gently.

There was one who did not remember Betty as the others did, for she had barely rounded out a year and a half of life when Mistress Betty had departed for Boston Town. This tiny maid was Drusilla, the youngest of the Blews. She was now clinging to her

mother's skirts, and regarding curiously the tall lass whom everybody was welcoming with such delight. Drusilla had been hearing about her absent sister ever since she could understand; and when the time drew near for Betty's return, the little maid became filled with as much anticipation as any of the others. But now, in awe of the tall sister whom she could not remember, she suddenly became very shy, and tried to keep out of sight behind her mother's skirts. Thus Betty did not see her until she had greeted all the others, though she had been wondering for some minutes where her little sister could be.

"Oh, you little dearie dear!" cried Betty, with a sudden squeak of delight, and making a dive for Drusilla. She tried to push the hood back to kiss the sweet red lips, when to her dismay she found it hard and fast to Drusilla's head.

"'Tis sewed on," her mother said in answer to Betty's sudden look of enquiry. Then, as her eyes twinkled, she added, "I had to sew it hard and fast to her hair, for she would not keep it on when she ran out in the sun. She was getting so sun-burned you could scarce tell her from one of the little Indians."

"And I don't want a little Indian for a sister!" declared Betty, as she took the little maid in her hands

and tossed her high. Oh, what strong, vigorous young arms Betty had! Truly her two and a half years in Boston Town had not spoiled her, had not turned her into a lackadaisical and indolent maid. Like Charles, Betty had a superabundance of life and made draft upon it to its fullest resource.

When Drusilla came down again Betty rooted under the stiff little hood for the kiss she had been wanting all this time; and now every atom of Drusilla's shyness had flown. She was wishing that Betty would toss her again, indeed was clamoring for it. But there was another waiting to be greeted, and this other required all the dignity Betty could summon on such short notice. In truth, Betty was caught unawares. She had had no inkling that the minister was so near, good Parson Joseph Lord, whom every one in Dorchester township, from the highest to the lowest, loved and revered. But Betty dropped him a gracious obeisance for all her embarrassment, then pressed a warm kiss upon the white hand he extended to her.

"Welcome home, my child," he said gently. "The Lord has graciously preserved you, for which we return Him our thanks." Then he laid his hands upon the sunny head and blessed her.

It was indeed a sweet home-coming—no maid could

have a sweeter, and Betty's heart was running over with the gladness of it, with gratitude, too, that she was the one for whom all this interest, this sweet concern was shown.

Anne was not forgotten, nor by any means neglected. Thoughtful, unselfish Betty took care of that. Wherever there was a greeting for her, there was also one for Anne. If the one who greeted Betty did not almost at the same time take note of the young maid from Boston, Betty at once called attention to her in some sweet and gracious way.

Betty was surprised to see how much the town had grown during her absence. It was now nearly twice the size it had been when she went away. Several new families had moved in and had built for themselves substantial houses. Two or three tradesmen had established themselves in business, so that now one did not have to go to Charles Town for all the purchases as heretofore. The town hall had another story with a balcony in front, where the town-crier stood to give notices of sales, to declare penalties, and also to proclaim news of importance. A belfry, also, had been added, and a wonderful bell brought all the way from England. Truly, this New Dorchester on the Ashley River in the Province of Carolina would

soon far outrival the old Dorchester, on Dorchester Bay, in Massachusetts, whence they had set sail that bleak December day nearly eight years before.

Three things in particular had happened which gave Betty deep concern. Master Christopher Portman, her father's best friend, was dead; there had been a fire at the warehouse which partially destroyed it and entirely destroyed her father's accounts; and the church building, to go down in history as "the old white meeting-house"—the first of the Congregational faith in the Province of Carolina—was completed.

CHAPTER II

“ FATHER’S LASS ”

“ OH, will father never come ? ”

Over and over Betty asked the question, both of herself and aloud of others. How she did want to see him! this dear father for whom she had been, even when a tiny lass, so much of a companion. From the time that she had been able to walk she had gone toddling after him, happy beyond words if she could but walk beside him and hold his hand. As she grew older, she had insisted on helping him in his tasks, though sometimes, she remembered now with a smile, her efforts had been anything but helpful. Yet, ere she went away to Boston, she had been of real service to her father, she knew. Betty had a quick head for figures, and with Aunt Joan as teacher, the little lass had made what was fine progress for that day in mathematics, ere she departed for Boston Town. Thus she had really been able to help her father with his accounts. Many times she had spent almost the entire day with him at the warehouse, making entries of the

number of skins bought, the price of each, the weights of the different bales, and the destination to which they were consigned. She could also correctly cast up many rows of figures, which highly delighted Mr. Blew. He was so proud of his Betty that he could not have found words properly to express himself.

Mr. Blew had, by dint of his own industry and the fine turn he had for business, become one of the most prosperous men in the colony. He was a man full of plans, and of many interests. He had been given various government trusts, and was now Agent of Indian affairs. In addition to the large business Mr. Blew did for the government in buying skins from the Indians, he was allowed to trade for himself. Thus he had reaped a large share of prosperity, but, unfortunately, like most successful people, had aroused the envy and then the enmity of the less thrifty—of one in particular. Of this one we will have more to say directly.

“How proud father will be when he sees how much I can really help him now!”

Betty had said this so many times to herself that she said it now to her mother, scarcely knowing that she did.

“Yes, dear heart, that he will,” her mother agreed

promptly. “ And right glad he will be, too, of your help, my Betty. There have been many times of late when he would have been rejoiced, I am sure, to have had your ready pen and quick wit at hand.”

Betty’s eyes glowed at this praise. It was sweet to be thus assured of her father’s need of her, to have so high a value put upon the services she could render to him.

“ Some things have recently occurred to perplex your father very much,” continued Mrs. Blew ; “ then there was the dreadful catastrophe of the fire in the warehouse. That happened just after all the accounts for the quarter had been posted.”

“ Did father lose everything of that kind, mother ? ” asked Betty with quivering voice ; “ all his papers, I mean. Were not some of them saved ? ”

“ Not one, Betty. That part of the warehouse, the one where your father had his office, was completely wrapped in flames ere the fire was discovered. They had hard work to save the other portion, the store-house, where the skins are weighed and kept. If it had not been for the nearness of the river they never would have done it.”

“ Oh, Beautiful, it must have been a dreadful time for you all ! How did the fire happen ? ”

"No one knows, Betty. There was something strange about it. Your father had had no fire in his office chimney that day, though the weather was cool. There are some who think it was caused by a spark from the fire in the pasture lot, where they had been burning the stubble, so that the grass might grow the better. But this is the belief of only two or three. The majority scout the idea, declaring it beyond the possibility of happening, as the pasture is too far away and the wind was not high. Furthermore, it was blowing in the opposite direction."

"Poor father, I know it has been a sad blow, losing his accounts and papers, for he is always so particular about every record. But as it was just after the close of the quarter, mother, it isn't so bad as it might have been; since on the last day of the quarter, Master Portman, as supervisor, always came to make a record himself. You see, I know, Beautiful, for I have been there to help father at such times."

"But Master Portman is dead, Betty," and a strange look passed over her mother's face.

"But he did not die, mother, until two or three days after the fire; I remember you have told me that."

"The fire occurred Friday evening at about nine of the clock. Some had already sought their beds, which

made it all the harder for the work necessary to be done quickly. By ten of the clock on the following Tuesday morning our good Master Portman had passed away.”

Betty wiped her eyes in sympathy, for both her own and her mother’s were misty with tears. Good Master Portman had been greatly beloved.

“ But Master Portman examined father’s accounts, did he not, mother? ” asked Betty again, losing sight for the moment of her sorrow at Master Portman’s death in the keen solicitude for her father. “ He made the record as usual? ”

“ Yes, Master Portman made the record,” her mother said slowly, but she said no more than this.

“ Then, of course, father is all right! ” cried Betty in a glad voice. “ Oh, mother, for just a few moments I had the fear that there might be some trouble for father in the loss of the accounts. I knew how anything like that could worry him. But, of course, if Master Portman took the record of the last quarter’s accounts, father is safe, for all the transactions for the other quarters are carefully transcribed in Charles Town. Yes, father’s all right, I’m sure.”

“ Yes, of course father is all right, my lass,” said a hearty voice at this moment from the doorway, and,

turning with a glad start, Betty saw her father hastening toward her, his arms extended. She went swiftly to meet him, all her heart shining in her eyes. What joy it was to feel his arms around her again, his kisses on lips and cheek and forehead, and to hear over and over the sweet words for which her heart had so many times hungered, "Father's lass! Father's dear, dear lass!"

Then he held her at arm's length, studying her intently.

Betty's was not a pretty face, strictly speaking, but it was a pure, sweet one, which was far better. It had, too, individuality stamped upon it. The eyes were her best feature. They were large, and of a beautiful dark gray in coloring, with long lashes sweeping the cheeks like silken fringes. Now they were full of a vivid happiness, the happiness of home-coming after long absence.

"Is it really and truly father's lass home again?" asked Mr. Blew.

Betty's heart was beating fast. Her breath came quickly. For a moment she was too happy for words. Then she answered him:

"Yes, father, 'tis truly your little Betty come back to be a nuisance again."

“ My little Betty! ” he repeated, and with a laugh. “ This tall lass with fine young lady ways calling herself my little Betty? Tut! tut! But ’tis hard to believe.”

He held her at arm’s length again, and this time he playfully pinched her cheek. His own eyes were in a glow of happiness.

Truly it was hard for him to realize that this tall lass in the smart print gown, which fitted her so becomingly, and with the soft mass of brown hair tucked high upon her head and held in place by a gleaming tortoise-shell comb, was the demure little Betty who had departed only two and a half years before for Boston Town.

One thing pleased him greatly. She had returned a strong and healthful-looking lass. There were no pale cheeks and drooping shoulders from hard study. He had always delighted so in her vigor and energy. She had been from a child bubbling over with it. He was rejoiced now to see that there was no diminution of the joy of living. Lassitude had not touched her; there was not even the hint of half-heartedness in anything. She was still as fresh and joyous as the morning in its first glad dawn.

“ And what has my lass learned in Boston Town? ”

he asked of her somewhat suddenly. She was seated between mother and father, and patting lovingly a hand of each. This was a sweet way Betty had had from a little child.

"Oh, father, I did not learn half, nay, one-tenth part of what I wished to learn. There was so much. How I did covet it and want to bring it away with me! 'Twas most truly a big desire that seized me, father."

"That was right, lass. The bigger the better, though you didn't get all you wanted. But I dare say you got the more from wanting so much. Remember you not the old Scotch proverb, 'Aim at a gown of gold and you'll surely get a sleeve'? I'm fully satisfied that our Betty has brought the sleeve away."

"I hope so, father," smiling.

"I know so, lass."

"The reports have all been highly favorable," said her mother. "We are proud of the good name your teachers have given you, my daughter."

"They were truly kind, and they did help me greatly," declared Betty, her eyes gleaming with gratitude. "They said so many pleasant things it made me fear that I should grow selfish from regarding myself too highly, and thinking of myself too much."

“ Self-regard is not selfishness, dear heart,” said her mother, imprisoning the loving hand that had been caressing hers.

“ Nay, self-value on the right foundation is a pretty good commodity to have, my Betty,” said Mr. Blew ; “ it helps one along in the world. I wouldn’t want to see my girl now with a head full of conceit, but if your teachers made you think highly of what you’ve earned by hard work, why, I for one am glad of it, my lass, and I hope to see you use it to the best advantage.”

“ That you shall, father. I am going to the warehouse with you one of the first things in the morning. Now you’ll not have to bother over those old accounts again by yourself. Aren’t you glad, father? ”

He answered her by a smile, and a nod of his head. But the next moment she saw a shadow flit over his face. Then he seemed to fall into a fit of abstraction, and he answered some of her questions at random. Betty noted, too, with a sudden pang at the heart, how aged her father was looking. He had turned gray rapidly during her absence. ’Tis true, there had been a tiny patch here and there before her departure, and Betty had called them her snow threads, but now the hair had whitened all about the temples, and his face looked haggard and drawn.

Betty's quick perception told her that her father was in some trouble, or it might be only worry over the affairs with the Indians. She hoped with all the fervor of her loving heart that such was the case, that there was no personal trouble for the father she idolized. She resolved that she would question her mother closely the first opportunity she had. She must know what was troubling her father. Perhaps there might be some way in which she could help him. If it were only a perplexing business snarl, how ready her quick brain and nimble fingers would be to help him unravel it!

After a while, Anne, who had been with Charles and Caroline for an inspection of the river, the fort, and the town in general, came in, and Mr. Blew brightened up for a time. He gave her cordial welcome, asked after all the relations in Boston Town and her own family in particular; joked her about the rivalry that was fast being established between Boston and the young town of Dorchester on the Ashley, and laughed quite heartily at Anne's own recital of what she had taken Charles's blustering reception to mean.

"She was getting ready, father, to run from the Indians," said Betty, with a smile.

“ And didn’t know where to run, except into the river,” Anne replied, with a smile as broad as Betty’s.

“ Suppose I had come marching down to the landing at the head of the Indians, and in Indian dress myself, what then? ” asked Charles teasingly.

“ Oh, I know I should quite have lost my wits in that case,” admitted Anne, good-naturedly, “ and should assuredly have gone tumbling into the water.”

Betty noted again at supper that her father’s brow was heavily clouded, and that he ate very little. Even a favorite dish his wife had prepared did not tempt his appetite.

“ I am afraid father is sick,” Betty managed to say in low tones to her mother, as she was stooping to help her with some venison Mrs. Blew was dishing up.

“ What makes you think that, Betty? ” her mother asked quickly.

“ Because he looks so. What is the matter, think you? He does not seem like himself at all. Why, mother, he is scarcely eating anything. And, oh, his face looks so pale and thin, and his hair so gray, and——” But Betty could say no more now. There was a sob in her throat that almost choked her as she sought to hold it back.

“Your father is grieving deeply over Master Portman’s death, Betty. Then, the fire at the warehouse troubled him greatly.”

Betty said no more on this subject to her mother that evening, but she was not satisfied. It seemed to her that her father’s trouble was far deeper than one caused by the death of a friend or the loss of valuable papers. Once she saw him start and shiver, and, springing quickly to his side, she asked him if he were cold.

“Why, no, lass,” he said quickly. “Cold on such a night as this? Why, how could that be?” and he nodded toward the open window through which the soft night air was stealing.

“But, father, you shivered just as though you were cold.”

“Did I, lass? Perhaps I was thinking of something that was not so pleasant. Perhaps it was the hoot of the owl in the swamp. There it is again! Do you not hear it? It really does give me a shivering to hear an owl hoot in that way,” and he drew his shoulders together with a nervous little movement.

“Father,” began Betty, but what further she was about to say was cut short by the hearty voice of Captain Gabriel bidding them good-evening. He had

come to talk with Mr. Blew over the business that had been partly the reason of his going to Boston.

The blithe captain came in with a smile that went all over his face, making it very handsome. He shook hands right and left, as though he hadn’t seen any of them before for a long while, then gave Betty a pat on the cheek, which was his way of showing his affection for her.

“ Well, lass, still afraid of the Indians, and ready to go back to Boston Town? ” he asked with a twinkle of the eye, as he greeted Anne.

“ Not quite yet, Captain Gabriel, ” she replied somewhat demurely.

“ Cousin Anne is going to stay until she has seen an alligator, ” said Daniel at this point.

“ And some Indians, ” added Charles mischievously, “ some real, warlike ones, I mean. ”

“ Nay, ” said Anne quite soberly, “ I’ve seen the only kind I care to see, the friendly ones in the village. ”

“ You are right, my child, ” spoke Mrs. Blew, “ an Indian prepared for war is no pleasant sight to behold. ”

She shuddered, remembering the time, seven years before, when the peaceful village had known all the

horrors of an Indian attack, when they had barely escaped with their lives to the fort.

Captain Gabriel brought good news for Mr. Blew. The sale of the home in old Dorchester had at last been effected. Ever since he had left it, the town authorities had restrained Mr. Blew from selling it because each prospective customer had not pleased them.* Now a purchaser had been found of whom the town authorities in every way approved.

Mr. Blew showed his pleasure, and expressed hearty thanks to his brother-in-law. Her father looked so pleased over the news Captain Gabriel had brought that Betty was sure now the cloud would leave his brow. No doubt, this was what had been troubling him all along. He needed the money here for his business in the new Dorchester. But, alas! the blithe Captain Gabriel had no more than taken his departure when Mr. Blew settled back into the state of deep abstraction. Betty was sure, too, that once she heard him mutter to himself.

Betty's troubled eyes were on him constantly. In vain she tried to take part in the gay talk going on all around her. Some young neighbors had come in, and

* In 1634 the city of Dorchester, Massachusetts, enacted a law forbidding any man having property within the village to sell it to another except "on the approval of the town."

Charles and Anne were making quite merry with them. Caroline and Edward were there, too; Caroline plying Betty from time to time with questions concerning Boston Town, and Edward relating to her some of the stirring events that had taken place in and around the settlement since her departure. Both noted Betty’s abstracted manner from time to time, but each set it down to the same cause. Betty was fatigued by her long trip and its subsequent events.

Convinced of this at last, Caroline said with some irritation:

“ Well, I see you have no ear at present for my foolish questions. You are no doubt worn out from the journey. Better go to bed soon, both you and Anne.”

But Betty was conscious of no fatigue; only of that gnawing pain at her heart for her father. She had replied to Caroline and Edward in an abstracted way, had taken little part in the conversation of the gay young crowd about her, and all because her thoughts had been centered in her father.

As they were saying good-night, she managed to get her arm through her father’s and to draw him within a corner.

“ Oh, father,” she said, as she pulled his face down to hers, “ what is the matter, dear? What is troubling

you? Won't you tell me? Won't you tell your Betty?"

He gave a sudden start.

"Why, what makes you think, Betty, that there is anything the matter?"

"Oh, father, your looks show plainly that there is. Do tell me. Perhaps I may help you."

"There's naught, Betty, in which you can help me that you shall not have the chance. I promise you that; so be content, dear child. Meanwhile, because I hang my head a little and look somewhat down in spirits, do not let it be a matter to give grave disturbance to my Betty's tender heart. 'Tis no more than some business affairs, very grave ones, I will admit, but no deeper than I have the hope of clearing after a while. So be content with that, and come now, give me my good-night kiss. 'Tis long, ah, long indeed, since father had one of those."

As she inclined the sweet face toward him, he put his hand under her chin, and, tilting her head back, looked into her eyes.

"Father's lass," he said; "father's own lass!"

He stooped to kiss her, and as he turned away, she saw that the tears were shining in his eyes.

CHAPTER III

“EXTRAORDINARY GOOD NEIGHBORLINESS”

“ANNE,” said Betty, one day at noon, and just five days after they had reached Dorchester, “I see Persis Lane, the Roddeys’ servant, coming with a covered dish on a salver. I know it is for you. The truth is, Nance”—this was Betty’s pet name for her cousin—“I’ve been waiting ever since your arrival for some such display of good neighborliness, and have been wondering again and again why it did not begin.”

“What do you mean?” asked Anne, looking mystified. “The neighbors have indeed been kind to me, but I don’t understand about the covered dish.”

“You’ll know pretty soon, then, for here is Persis at the door. ’Tis some toothsome morsel, I’m sure; that Madam Roddey herself has prepared for you.”

“For me? Why should she prepare a toothsome morsel for me? I am not sick; and I need no addition to the overabundant amount of wholesome food my Cousin Dorinda so freely supplies. Dear me, Bess, do you suppose now there could be any one so foolish

as to suppose I stood in need of food, that I do not get enough here? Why, that would be shameful! And what *would* Cousin Dorinda say?"

Anne spoke with considerable embarrassment, and her face had begun to flush.

"Oh, you foolish thing!" laughed Betty. "'Tis no reflection upon your appetite, nor upon my mother either! Beautiful would laugh heartily at you if she could hear you. Nay, Nance, get your face cool again. 'Tis very silly to flush so over naught. What a joke I'll have to tell on you! The covered dish contains but a bit of 'good neighborliness'—as my father calls it—something from Madam Roddey's own table, I am sure. But there is Persis rapping again. I suppose no one else has heard her. I'll go myself, and I'll claim a part of the toothsome dish for doing it; you hear me, Nance?"

Betty flitted away with a smile wreathing her lips. Directly she returned, the smile covering her face. She had the salver and the dish, and was advancing with the careful, mincing steps Persis had displayed on approaching the door.

"Here it is, Anne," said Betty, and dropping her so deep a courtesy that the covered dish almost slid off the salver; "a dainty tempting enough for even your

sated appetite,” continued Betty, as she steadied the dish. “See! a sweet-potato pudding!

“‘With ginger and spice
And everything nice.’

’Tis sent with Madam Roddey’s compliments, and the hope that you’ll soon be over to see her. I returned her word that you surely would, and that you would expect another pudding when you came.”

“Oh, Elizabeth Blew,” gasped Anne in astonishment, “you assuredly didn’t send any such impudent message as that? because if you did, I’ll——”

“Go right over and tell Madam Roddey differently? Well, all right. But, come on, now our own dinner is ready, and I’ll help you eat the pudding; so, too, will Charles and Daniel, I know. It is by far the most tempting I’ve seen in many a day.”

“Oh, Betty, what will Cousin Dorinda say?”

“Well, come on, and we’ll see,” replied Betty teasingly.

It was as Betty had intimated. Mrs. Blew laughed heartily when she heard Anne’s protests and saw her face of dismay.

“Why, my dear child,” she said, “this is quite common here, these little exchanges of neighborliness. Neighbors frequently send tempting bits of food pre-

pared for their own table to each other. Often it is much more than a bit of food, for many times whole haunches of venison, a quarter of beef, a great string of sausages, a cheese, and the like, are among the offerings received. I think this custom has grown out of the fact that there has always been plenty in this colony. 'Plenty makes hospitality,' you know. Unlike the more northern colonies, those planted in South Carolina have never known what it is to want for food. The woods are full of game, the streams abound with fish, and the crops have always been plentiful."

"But I think it so queer, Cousin Dorinda, that Madam Roddey should have sent *me* the potato pudding. I am not one of the neighbors," and Anne was laughing now. "Why, I have seen Madam Roddey but once since I came, and then only to speak to her."

"'Tis done because you are a visitor, dear," said Mrs. Blew. "These little neighborly attentions are always extended to visitors. It has been the kindly custom ever since the colony began. 'Tis done, I am sure, not only as an expression of goodwill, but to make one feel at home."

"It took me so by surprise," said Anne, "I scarcely knew what to do or say. At first I fear I was somewhat provoked with kind Madam Roddey. It seemed,

dear cousin, that it was a reflection on you, an intimation that I was not—was not getting a sufficiency of food."

Anne was stammering greatly ere she concluded. Her face, too, had flushed scarlet.

A peal of laughter broke from Betty, while Mrs. Blew's smile was quite perceptible.

"Nance is finding out some things about our dear old Dorchester, I mean our Dorchester here, mother, that are almost taking her breath away. They do things so differently in Boston Town, you know. For instance, when I went to stay with Cousin Penuel, he had to give notice to the town authorities that I was expected, and that he was able to keep me, in fact, as one of his own family. When Anne was coming here," continued Betty, and now she gave Anne's cheek a sly pinch, "she wanted to know if father would not have to do the like for her—notify the selectmen. When I told her nay, she was greatly surprised."

"'Tis no surprise that Anne should have expected that," said Mr. Blew, who had entered in time to hear much of the conversation. "It has been the way in Boston Town for a long while, ever since I was a boy, in fact. I can remember well that, when I was no more than ten to twelve years of age, they were so

strict about admitting strangers that many harsh and cruel things were done. They seem doubly so now as I look back upon them through the warm light of the exceeding great neighborliness that shines about our pathway here.

“It was about the year 1672, as well as I can recall,” continued Mr. Blew, “that a widow in Dorchester township—I am speaking of our old home now—was heavily fined for housing her own son-in-law from another township. She was threatened with prison if she did it again without consulting the authorities.”

“Why, father, I never heard of anything so tyrannical!” cried Charles.

“There were even worse things, Charles. Some months later a man was imprisoned, as well as fined, because he housed his daughter through a terrible spell of weather. She was married, and lived in another town. He was fined for keeping her without notifying the authorities, and put in prison because he had kept her from her husband.”

“Well, I’m glad I didn’t live in such a place when I was big enough to know about it!” declared Charles, drawing himself up. “I know I should have wanted to pummel some of those old selectmen!”

“Charles, you must speak more respectfully. You surely have forgotten of whom you speak.

“I remember how, at a much later date,” continued Mr. Blew, “the harboring of strangers, even of relatives, was severely frowned upon by the magistrates. There were constant clashings between the citizens and the authorities in regard to this matter. Fines and imprisonments were frequent. Newcomers were warned out of town, and in more than one instance, where parties refused to heed the warnings, severe floggings ensued.”

“I recall one such case myself,” said Mrs. Blew. “The poor man, after being flogged, was run out of town, and was never seen again. It was supposed that he perished in the forest.”

“Oh, how cruel!” cried Betty, her eyes flashing; “and how rejoiced I am that it is so different here in our dear old Dorchester, where every one is so kindly disposed toward the other, and where such ‘extraordinary good neighborliness,’ as father terms it, prevails.”

“I suppose there was some excuse for the early settlers of Boston Town,” said Mr. Blew. “More than once strangers, kindly entertained, had proven to be enemies in disguise, and had brought woe and calamity in return for hospitality. ’Tis no wonder, then,

that the people of the town soon came to look with suspicion upon all strangers. Brother Gabriel tells me," concluded Mr. Blew, "that the authorities are still very strict in their investigation of strangers, that every family expecting to entertain one must give notice, together with a personal description of the stranger, and a statement of his circumstances."*

"Dearie me!" exclaimed Charles, with a quizzical look at Betty, "I wonder how Cousin Penuel ever described *you*, Bess! I'd truly like to read the description. I know it must have been something after this wise: Expected to arrive shortly, at the home of Master Penuel Sumner, Magistrate of Boston Town, an Indian lass from the wilds of Carolina; hair all her own; teeth capable of munching any amount of venison or of codfish—whichever it may be—and an appetite to correspond. Has eyes that see everything, and a tongue that is never still. Effects: Three best gowns, with bands and ruffles, and a slash in each sleeve; two of print, two of holland, and two more of woolen stuff; some girdles, a necklace, mitts, tuckers, and a

* As late as 1714 we find citizens of Boston Town still prohibited from entertaining strangers without giving notice to the authorities, together with descriptions of the stranger and his circumstances.—Alice Morse Earle in "Home Life in Colonial Days."

very fair supply of thread and worsted hose, of Calamanco shoes, and of leather pumps—to say naught of twenty knots of hair ribbon. Said lass is the second daughter of plain Master Philip Blew, of the township of New Dorchester, in the Province of Carolina, and the adopted daughter of the Cacique of Stono, Grand Chief of all the Kiawhas. From this Indian father she has great expectations in the way of certain stores of eagle feathers, cowrie shells, elks’ teeth, and deer horns. Open to her, good town of Boston, and permit the entrance of the young Indian Princess that is to be!

“Just imagine the effect of that description, Bess, as the town crier heralded your coming. Wasn’t it enough to make every citizen within hearing stand agape with expectancy?”

“For shame, Charles!” cried Anne indignantly. “You ought to have a good pounding, and I feel like giving it to you. By the way, what a fine town crier you’d make yourself!” she added. “Why don’t you go to Boston and apply for such a place? Methinks you’d readily get it. They would have to give you only one trial to be convinced of your talents.”

“Thanks, Mistress Anne,” responded Charles, as he gave her a sweeping bow. “Your friendly interest

and kindly suggestion are both appreciated; but I have no thought of going so far as Boston Town to seek the honors to which I am plainly aware I am entitled, when there are greater ones awaiting me here."

"Conceited thing!" exclaimed Betty, as she gave his ear a tweak, and was about to say more, but just then Mrs. Blew called them to dinner.

The potato pudding proved all that Betty had declared it would be. As Madam Roddey had sent a bounteous supply, not only Anne's plate, but all the others had liberal helping.

"This is truly good!" exclaimed Anne, as she had finished her portion of the potato pudding. "Madam Roddey must indeed be a famous cook."

"That she is," agreed Charles, "but she can't beat our Beautiful," and he looked with loving, loyal eyes at his mother. "Wait, cousin, till you have tasted some of our mother's pumpkin pies. Are we not to have some very soon, Beautiful?"

"Was that compliment meant to cajole me into the making of them, Charles?" she asked, a teasing light in her eyes.

"Nay, mother, you must know it was not," and Charles showed great confusion. "I was but desirous

to have Cousin Anne find out how truly delicious you could make them.”

“Well, she shall do so soon, I promise you, Charles. I am but waiting for the frost to fall on the pumpkins.”

“I wish that could be to-night,” said Charles, and with such earnestness that a ripple of laughter went around at his expense.

“Oh, Charles,” cried Betty, “I wonder if ’twere for Anne, after all, you wanted the pumpkin pies!”

The sending of the potato pudding was but the beginning of many appetizing gifts, “little tastes from our own dinner,” that found their way to the Blew homestead on account of the young stranger from Boston. Sometimes these coveted treasures came steaming hot; again, they were deliciously cool, as their composition might demand. Even the children vied with their elders in this charming and friendly custom of sending gifts to the stranger. They gathered nuts and berries and grapes, which they sent to Anne, often heaped amid autumn leaves picturesquely arranged in rude willow and bark receptacles fashioned by their own fingers. These evidences of neighborly kindness touched Anne deeply, and many were the sweet and fervent accounts of it she wrote home. She wished with all her heart that every community would

show this spirit of abounding hospitality. How much more beautiful it would make life!

There was, too, much visiting, a constant exchange of neighborly calls, and always pressing invitations to come to share a meal.

Anne soon found that this hospitality was not confined to the one settlement. It extended in all directions, in fact, throughout the Province. Every one kept open house. The innkeepers complained that this condition of affairs seriously interfered with their business. One in the neighborhood of Dorchester, the host of the Gray Horse Tavern, had had to close his doors, for the reason, he declared, that every planter within forty miles kept an inn of his own, where every traveler of respectable appearance was welcomed and entertained "without money and without price."

Even the very poor were hospitable, for even the very poor had an abundance to eat. A man more than once had given his own bed to travelers, and contented himself with sitting up by the fire for the night. This was the beginning of that princely hospitality which to this day abounds to such perfection throughout the South.

Anne made friends rapidly. She was a sweet and wholesome girl, rather serious at times, but now and then showing a keen appreciation of humor that de-

lighted Betty. There was a deep affection between the two cousins, as well as a bond of good comradeship. It was a great pleasure to Betty to make Anne laugh. It gave her face such a “heartening look,” as Betty expressed it.

Betty herself was brimming over with merriment, except now and then as a shade of seriousness fell upon her own sunny face. It was not a world all joyousness, as Betty was beginning to learn. There were grave things to be faced, and matters of weight to be pondered. In fact, life itself, though so attractive, had that which was serious about it. She was aware of its responsibilities, though she did not as yet comprehend them. But sorest of all trials that Betty had had to meet, that which went more deeply down into her heart, and gave to the sweet eyes their heaviest cloud, was her father’s present condition. It had come like a shock to her on their first meeting after Betty’s more than two years of absence, and, day by day, her heart grew heavier as she watched him.

“What could be the matter?” Over and over Betty asked herself the question, and she asked it, too, of her father himself, and of her mother. Always it was with the same result.

“I am not sick, my daughter,” her father would say,

though now and then he would admit that he was not feeling so well. It was always a headache from the sun or the wind, or a touch of cold from getting his feet wet while in the canoes.

"Your father's business is perplexing him, as you know, daughter," her mother would reply. "Some of the Indians worry him a great deal. They are unreliable, and he never knows if they are going to keep their contracts. When he is under pledge to furnish so many scores of pelts for an outward-going vessel, and he knows that he must have them in Charles Town by a certain day or else prove false to his own contract, it is enough to make him look distressed and care-worn."

Betty was never satisfied by any of these answers. Her father had had just such perplexities before she had gone away, she knew, for she had shared them with him—but he had never looked as he did now. There was some deep trouble on his mind, far greater than any of his usual perplexities; Betty was sure of this. Whatever it was, neither Edward nor Caroline knew. Betty soon became convinced of this. She had questioned them, but they were as much in the dark as she was, though they, too, admitted that they had taken note of their father's abstracted appearance. They had

set it down to troublesome business cares ; in fact, their mother had told them such was the case.

A high resolve entered Betty's heart. She would ask no more questions, for she saw now plainly how they worried both father and mother, but she would watch closely. She would be always on the alert for ways in which to help and cheer her father. She would show him a face of sunshine ; she would say bright and pleasant things in his presence, but, above all, she would watch for the opportunity to do for him every little deed of love and ministration within her power.

That very night and for others thereafter, as she knelt beside her little white bed, this prayer came from Betty's tremulous lips :

“ Dear Lord, help me to make the way a little smoother for father's feet. If I am not to know his trouble, help me at least to help him bear it.”

CHAPTER IV

SPANISH FOES

"I WANT you and Anne to come to the fort this morning," said Charles, shortly after breakfast.

"For what purpose, Master Drummer?" asked Betty gayly; "to see you in all your glory, and to hear that rat-tat-tat till one's ears are almost split?"

"Nay," replied Charles, looking aggrieved, "you know I am not so anxious to show myself off, Betty. If I were, there's Uncle Gabriel who, for some reason or other, ever since he came back, has set a frowning face against any more beating of the drum than is necessary. I know not his reason, though Chi-co-la did tell me yesterday that there was some complaint among the Indians who come to trade."

"Why, what complaint could there be?" asked Betty quickly. "The Indians themselves are fond of big noises, and I should think such deafening dins as you have shown yourself capable of raising, Master Charles, would mightily please them."

Charles flushed a little, but answered good-naturedly:

"They *are* fond of big noises, but it seems they want to make them themselves. They declare that we are enticing away from them the best of their good spirits, because of the greater entertainment we have been able to provide for them. Think of that sweeping compliment for me, sister, to my magnificent drum-beating, I mean," and Charles laughed heartily.

"Why, I never heard of anything so foolish," declared Anne. "Don't you think now Chi-co-la was joking?"

"Chi-co-la joking!" repeated Betty, and looking aghast. "Why, Anne, he would never think of doing anything like that. He doesn't know what it means. Neither Chi-co-la nor any other Indian that I ever saw could joke."

"Except old Yin-hon," said Charles, with a laugh. "You forgot him, Betty, and the joke he played when we were little. We'll have to tell Anne about that sometime."

"Yes, I had forgotten old Yin-hon," admitted Betty, "but he is the only one. Things are just as Chi-co-la says they are. The poor Indians are so ignorant and superstitious. Good Parson Lord and others,

even our dear Aunt Joan, have tried to teach them; but where there is so much darkness it takes a long time for even a little light to enter."

"But come," said Charles, "let us go to the fort. I have asked Emily and Henry Roddey, too, and Captain Gabriel has given us permission to go out on the bastions. I want to show Anne that lovely bend of the river where the water looks like a lake, and the little cove, too, overhung by a tangle of shrubbery, where the Spaniards kept their sloop concealed so long, and were prevented from doing mischief by the merest turn of good fortune for us."

"The Spaniards!" repeated Anne. "Oh, have they ever been *here*?"

"Yes, once," admitted Charles, "and it is believed by Captain Gabriel, my father, and others that they'll try to come again."

"I hope not," faltered Anne. "What would become of us if they did?"

"Fear not, cousin," replied Charles, his eyes flashing and his boyish form drawn erect. "Our fort is well-nigh impregnable and our people brave. Besides, we have strong guns now, and an abundance of ammunition. For these reasons we do not dread the Spaniards as we once did. But they are wily foes," he added

thoughtfully, "and they are constantly trying to set the Indians against us."

"How far away are the Spaniards?" asked Anne, in a faltering voice.

"As far as their fort at St. Augustine, I should judge," replied Charles after a pause; "about 300 miles by sea, and no more than 250 miles through the forests, as the crow flies. If there are any lurking bands nearer at present, we do not know it."

They were nearing the entrance to the fort by this time, and there were Emily and Henry Roddey hastening to meet them.

"I thought we'd be late," said Henry, "and I was surely glad, when we turned the angle of the town hall to see you walking hither. How do you do, Mistress Anne? Is Charles going to teach you to fire the cannon?"

"Not much I am," replied Charles, "with Uncle Gabriel around. Now, if he wasn't there, we might have a little fun."

"I don't call firing off a cannon fun," said Anne, with a shudder.

"Nor I either," asserted Emily.

"That's because you never tried it!" declared Betty, her eyes sparkling, her cheeks taking on a sudden

glow. "Oh, the roar is glorious! and it fairly makes your head spin to watch the ball as it goes darting away."

"Why, did you ever see such a sight?" asked Anne, her eyes wide open with astonishment.

"That I have! 'Twas the very time Charles speaks of, when the Spanish sloop had slipped up the river by night and had hidden in the little cove to spy upon the fort. I was with Uncle Gabriel when the news was brought him. 'The wretches!' he cried indignantly. 'I'll give them a shot close to the ear, just to let them know their hiding place is discovered. Then they'll take themselves off if they are wise, in time to save their carcasses. 'Tis a better plan than to seek to make them prisoners, for I want them no nearer than they are at present.'

"He hastened to the fort, and I kept close beside him, though he did not know I was there; he was that occupied with thoughts of the Spaniards and the desire to outwit them, he lost sight of all else. He hastened to the bastion, turned the cannon, and fired it himself. My! but 'twas glorious! I clapped my hands and danced up and down as soon as it was fired, and then Uncle Gabriel saw me."

"And pounced on her, and carried her to mother

for a sound spanking, as she deserved," announced Charles.

"Nay, Charles, you know that he did not. But Uncle Gabriel truly was provoked with me, and Beautiful did punish me, as I will admit, Charles, I did deserve. I can see now the risk I ran, for in my ignorance I might have stood too near the muzzle of the gun, and my clothes might have become ignited, if no other harm were done. Then, too, not seeing me, Uncle Gabriel might have knocked me from the bastion as he turned the cannon."

"Oh, Bess, I don't see how you could have done it!" cried Anne. "I know I should be quite frightened out of my wits to be so near a cannon when it fired. I don't like to hear them, even at distance. How old were you then?"

"Just turned ten."

"Mercy me! No older than that? Well, it must be, Bess, that you were intended for a soldier. What pity, then, that you are not a boy."

"I like the sound of the guns," admitted Betty, "and I like, too, to follow the flight of the balls. It nearly carries me off my feet, I feel that I want to be a bird, so that I can go speeding after them. But, oh, I have no liking for the bloodshed that follows! Nay, Anne,

I do assure you I do not want to be a soldier then. And the groans of the wounded and dying, how terrible they are! We both remember a time when they were dreadful indeed, do we not, Emily?" and Betty shuddered.

"You mean the time when the Westo Indians attacked the village, and we had to flee to the fort for safety? That was indeed a fearful experience! I shall not forget it to my dying day, especially when the wounded and dead were brought into the hall-way of the fort."

"The Indians are all friendly now, are they not?" asked Anne suddenly.

"The tribes close around us are," replied Charles, "but those farther away, especially the tribes along the Florida frontier, are still very hostile. It is all the work of the Spaniards, we know. They are constantly stirring up the Indians against the Carolina settlers."

"And stirring them up to some purpose, it appears," added Henry, "for now and then we have unpleasant evidence of it."

"Why do the Spaniards hate the Carolina settlers so?" asked Anne.

"Out of pure meanness, I suppose," replied Charles.

“Nay, Charles,” said Betty, “you know there is a deeper reason. The Spaniards think the English people have no right to settle here; that all this country belongs of right to the King of Spain.”

“By what right, I’d like to know?” blurted out Charles.

“By right of discovery. You recall that Columbus——”

“Oh, I am tired of hearing about old Columbus!” declared Charles somewhat irreverently. “Everybody knows, that is, with sense enough to understand the matter, that Master Christopher Columbus, and whatever else his name might have been, never so much as set footprint on a single sand-hillock of all this vast territory.”

“Oh, but, Charles, he landed at more than one place in the West Indies, and you know that the Spaniards reckon it the same.”

“But we English people don’t reckon it the same, Mistress Elizabeth, nay, not by long odds. Now, as good scholars know,” continued Charles, a meaning twinkle in his eye, “’twas Master Cabot, sent out in the time of King Henry VII., who really landed on the shores of this great Continent and made it *ours*! Therefore I can’t see what the Spaniards have to do

with it, and why they should make such a fuss about our settling here."

"They think they have a great deal to do with it," replied Henry, "and they are going to show us that they have. Why, they don't look on this as being Carolina at all, but as Florida, and their own especial possession, because of Ponce de Leon's discovery in 1513."

"Well, they can go on claiming it," said Charles warmly, "and that will be about all there is in it. English blood will tell every time, and you'll see that it will!" announced Charles proudly.

"What is that you are declaring so emphatically, Charles?" asked a somewhat amused voice at this juncture, and there, just within the entrance to the fort, stood big Captain Gabriel.

"I was declaring, sir," replied Charles, and without a moment's confusion or hesitation, "that if the Spaniards think no more of their carcasses than to risk them in an open fight with the English, they'll get a drubbing every time, and one they won't soon forget either."

"Right you are, lad! But is it to be an *open fight*? Ah, that's what we dread far more than we do a face-to-face conflict, their treachery, the underhand way in which they seek to arouse the Indians against us."

The big kind-hearted Captain gave the young people a warm welcome. He was known as a strict soldier, one who required the utmost obedience, and whose discipline was, at times, even too rigid, some thought. But when off duty he unbent to such an extent that he did not seem the same man. Captain Gabriel was really quite genial and warm-hearted by nature, and he loved young people.

The fort built by the settlers of the new Dorchester, which was begun in the very year they came into the Carolina wilderness from the old Dorchester in Massachusetts—that is in 1696—stood on the bank of the Ashley River, just at the edge of the town. It was on a noble eminence, commanding the approach from the river in each direction. The structure was of *coquina*, an almost indestructible compound, when hardened, of crushed shells, sand, and water, and endures to this day almost perfect in outline. There were two bastions, massive and well protected, and mounted with guns quite large for that period.

Though it was a time of peace, the fort was nevertheless in a state of readiness. Ammunition and provisions were stored within, and there was an underground cistern well filled with water, for the Ashley at that point is salt, and other provision had to be

made for drinking water. Soldiers, too, were on duty, and others were patrolling the walls. Among the latter was Edward, the older brother of the Blews, though he was not just at that time doing guard duty. He seemed to be inspecting a cannon, with a view to making some change in its position.

To Caroline's delight Captain Gabriel permitted them to go upon the walls. He would not often allow them to do this.

"One never knows the danger," he would say, "and a bullet or an arrow from some treacherous Indian might come at any time."

But to-day he consented to their going up and without demur.

"Getting ready for a fight, Edward?" asked Charles somewhat gayly.

"Yes, I am making preparation for what might come," his brother answered, "though I am happy to say there isn't the slightest indication of war at present."

"How pleased I am to hear you say that, Cousin Edward!" cried Anne with relief. "Oh, I do hope there never will be any prospect of war again, that the dear people here have had all the trouble of that kind they'll ever know."

"Amen, lass," said Captain Gabriel fervently.

"I think Anne was for a while afraid to come and make us this visit," said Betty, a little mischievous sparkle in her eye. "I verily believe she had the idea that Charles Town itself was right in the midst of the wilderness, and that there were Indians at every corner waiting to seize her."

"And to carry away this pretty, silky scalp," added Charles, taking up his sister's teasing tone, as he placed his hand with something of a caressing touch upon his cousin's golden brown hair. "I tell you, Nance, if you are wise, you'll keep away from the Indians, even from those who seem peaceful, for I believe there is no one of them who could resist the temptation of such a trophy as this. How long did you say it was, Betty, when unwound; almost down to her feet?"

"Oh, Charles, do *hush!*" plead Betty. "'Tis cruel of you to carry the fun so far. Don't even jest about such things; it makes me shudder."

"So it makes me, too," declared Emily. "I don't see, Charles, how you *can* make jest of such matter, when you recall the dreadful things that have happened."

"The lad is unthoughted," said Captain Gabriel,

"no worse than this. Besides, his heart has grown light, like those of so many others of us, because of the long-continued state of peace."

"That is it, Uncle Gabriel," returned Charles gratefully. "Cousin Anne, I do assure you I could never for a moment have made jest of such a matter if there were the least likelihood of its happening."

"That is all right, Charles, and you needn't mind any more about it. But I must confess you did make my flesh creep awfully at the mere thought of a savage trying to take my scalp. Enough!" and Anne shuddered.

"Rest easy, lass, if you *have* come into the wilderness," said Captain Gabriel with assurance. "I think the worst for this colony is over. Peace and plenty reign now, and with God's help we'll keep it so."

They had come now to the northeast bastion, and were looking down the river. It was indeed a smiling and a peaceful scene on which they gazed. To the left lay the village, its dwellings of stout logs clustered close together, for the better protection of their inhabitants. But there was a small patch of ground connected with each, in which both vegetables and flowers were cultivated.

At that time the village embraced some twelve hun-

dred souls, and was, outside of Charles Town, the most thriving and populous settlement in the Province. In addition to the dwellings, there were now several public buildings, including a large town hall, finished by the addition of a second story, with a balcony in front for the town crier.

The village proper covered the space of about thirty acres. It lay along the left bank of the river, with the fort at its eastern edge. Two narrow streets divided it into sections. They were kept scrupulously clean; so, too, were the small plots of ground about the dwellings. Old-fashioned flowers had been planted, and the most necessary of the vegetables. A few pride of India trees and two or three times as many wide-spreading evergreen water oaks afforded grateful shade during the summer heat.

Several of the houses had been built a story and a half. They had portholes on every side, and each looked like a small fortress in itself. A few had windows of tiny glass panes, but in each instance the protection of heavy shutters had been provided, to be closed in the event of an Indian attack.

As they looked down upon it, the village presented a bustling scene, for it was about midway of the morning, and all were busy at their several occupations.

The curling rings of smoke from the rear portion of the dwellings gave evidence that the thrifty housewives and their hired assistants were busy with the preparation of the noonday meal. There was the ring of smiths' hammers, the sound of carpenters' saws, the chop of the workman's ax, and the lusty calls of the men at the warehouses as they hove away at heavy bales. It was indeed a picture of thrift, of stirring industry, and of homely, honest content, pleasing to the eye and quickening to the heart.

"What a fine, smart town it really is!" exclaimed Anne. "I had no idea of it before, because I had not until now seen it so completely. Why, Bess, it's no wonder that you are so proud of this new Dorchester, and were continually telling the folks in Boston Town that it was very nearly as smart a place as theirs."

"I *am* proud of it," replied Betty, her eyes kindling. "'Tis in truth a dear place. But you should have seen it, Nance, when 'twas naught but a wilderness. Then you would appreciate all the more what has been done to make it such a pleasing sight."

"Our people have indeed wrought wondrously," spoke Captain Gabriel, his eyes, too, in a glow; "from the brier the rose has blossomed. There isn't a settle-

ment within its bounds that is the source of deeper satisfaction to the people of the Province.”

He spoke truly, for during the more than half century that it grew and flourished, there was not a spot within the territory of Carolina that gave to its inhabitants such keen pride, with the single exception of Charles Town itself, as this stirring settlement, founded through New England thrift on the banks of the Ashley.

CHAPTER V

A VISIT OF STATE

AT their feet, as they stood upon the northeast bastion of the fort, flowed the river, a deep, dark and somewhat sluggish current, except as a sudden tropic storm stirred it into white-capped waves. About the bluff where the fort stood it made a graceful, sweeping curve, almost a complete half-circle. Just above the northern boundary of the town it turned back again upon its course, forming a second curve and widening here into a miniature lake bordered by great stretches of stiff marsh grass.

It was Indian summer, and the woods were aflame with gorgeous coloring. Beyond the town were the fields cultivated in the spring and summer, but now brown and bare where the ripened grain had been gathered. Golden-rod grew along the waste places, while intermingled with it were the purple-berried elder and the flaming scarlet of the sumac. Thickets of dark green myrtle, that no touch of frost could turn, marked the river's course, while beyond all on either

side lay the bordering woods, deep, dark, mysterious, with the crests of their giant pines seeming to tower into the very blue of the sky.

It was the union of all that was picturesque and beautiful, of that, too, which spoke of peace, of contentment and of a joyous lease upon life.

"Just to the right of the lake, where the river makes the dip into the forest, is where the Spanish sloop was hidden," said Charles. "Uncle Gabriel's cannon ball took off a big limb of that tulip tree that bends above the cove. 'Tis said that the fragments of the limb fell all over the sloop. Anyhow, the Dons were frightened almost out of their wits. One of them shortly appeared, frantically waving a white garment. Uncle Gabriel gave them to understand that they might depart that time with whole skins, but if they ever dared to return, or if they even lingered in the neighborhood, there'd be none of them left to get away, even without skins."

"And did they go at once?" asked Anne.

"That they did, though the wind was so against them they had a hard time getting the sloop out. But I can tell you they kept that bit of white cloth going vigorously all the while. They seemed to think uncle would forget his promise and fire anyhow. They

surely were frightened!" and Charles laughed boisterously.

"How many were they, Captain Gabriel?" asked Henry. "I have forgotten, if I have heard."

"No more than ten or twelve, I think in all. I am satisfied they were merely spies, and did not intend to attack us unless they could do so by means of the Indians. But we did not let them stay long enough to accomplish that."

"Have they ever been back since, that you know, sir?" asked Anne, a little vibration in her voice.

"Nay, lass, not so far as I've heard. But the Spaniard is both a wily and an implacable foe. Once he sets out in wreaking his revenge he never gives over till he has either accomplished it, or death puts it beyond him. We know full well that in the Spaniard we have a constant and dangerous foe. Hence, lass, being always on the lookout for him, and prepared for what he may do, we are in a sense secure."

"I think the Spaniards will not succeed in turning the Indians against us to any very perilous extent," said Edward. "My opinion is that we here in the interior are comparatively safe, especially the settlement of Dorchester, with such a fort as we have and provisioned as it is. If the Spaniards attempt further

attack upon the Carolina Colony it will be by way of the sea and at Charles Town. I believe their next move will be an alliance with the French for a joint attack upon the defenses of the city.* I heard talk like this more than once during the times I was in St. Augustine."

"There is no use denying," said Captain Gabriel gravely, "that the very situation of the Carolina Colony is a peril in itself. It is too far from the other colonies to hope for their support at a time of pressing need. Jamestown, the nearest white colony of friends, outside the feeble settlement at Albemarle, is nearly three times the distance from us that St. Augustine is. Furthermore, the hatred of the Spaniards is directed particularly against the Carolina colonists. They cannot forget that the Province was founded to assert the dominion of Great Britain against that of Spain in disputed territory."

"Why should it be disputed territory, sir?" asked Charles somewhat hotly. "Did not the settlers receive it under royal grants? Did they not come hither with the sanction of the King?"

* This is exactly what happened two years later, in 1706, when the combined fleets of Spain and France under Monsieur LeFebvre, Admiral of France, vigorously attacked Charles Town, but were ignominiously defeated by the gallant Carolinians.

"But the question is," said Henry, "did King Charles have the right to make the grants? Spain claimed that he had not. I've heard my father discuss it over and over."

"I don't see why he didn't have the right," said Anne. "Wasn't Carolina once a part of the tract known as Virginia, and wasn't it given to Sir Walter Raleigh by Queen Elizabeth, and by right of exploration, too?"

"Yet thirty years before Sir Walter Raleigh ever set foot within the territory afterwards known as Virginia," remarked Henry, "the Spaniards had been there. As early as 1556 Chesapeake Bay was known to them as the Bay of Santa Maria, and an expedition had been sent to colonize the country, though it proved unsuccessful, 'tis true."

"The Spaniards were undoubtedly the first white people to tread the soil of Carolina," said Betty.

"But they did not hold it, sister," declared Charles. "They did not stay and build settlements. Therefore they assuredly forfeited all claim. It was an uninhabited country save for the Indians when our people took possession."

"The Spaniards did not look at it in that way, Charles," said Captain Gabriel. "Spain claims

Carolina as a part of Florida, on which she has had a settlement for almost one hundred and forty years. I allude to St. Augustine."

"Does a new country belong to the ones who discover it, or to those who settle it, Captain Gabriel?" asked Emily.

The big captain smiled.

"My child, that is a hard question. So far as this new country is concerned, it seems that might and not right decides the claim. However, the different European governments claiming territorial possessions in America bring forward as their right to do so one or the other of the following reasons: It is theirs by right of discovery, by right of occupation, by right of conquest, or theirs by right of treaties with the Indians. Claims have been from time to time adjusted upon each of these grounds."

"Which do you think is the most just way, uncle?" asked Betty.

Captain Gabriel looked at her intently for a moment. His lips softened and a deep earnestness came into his eyes.

"To me there is only *one* just way, Betty."

"And that, Uncle Gabriel?"

"By making treaties with the Indians. The land is

theirs. This country was held by them long years before the white man even dreamed that it was in existence. When at last the white man did come, then it should have been as friend and not as foe. Yes, my Betty, there is but one right way, and that was the way adopted by the good Quaker, Penn. If all others had been governed by his rule of justice and kindness, then would there have been little if any trouble with the Indians."

"Then, Captain Gabriel," said Henry quickly, "there ought not to have been any trouble with them here. Did not our colonists, even after they had been given grants to this tract of land, pay the Indians for it?"

"Yes, my lad, they did, yet nothing like the price that ought to have been paid. But your father, my brother-in-law, Master Portman, myself and three others insisted that what was paid should be paid, though the officials of the government were themselves against us, calling it foolish, quixotic, and I remember not what all."

"Yet, despite this justice showed them, we have had trouble with the Indians," said Henry.

"That came through the mischief wrought for us by outsiders, and through Spanish influence, my lad.

Thus is good intent often overthrown by the power of evil."

"I think there is not going to be any more Indian trouble for us," said Emily brightly. "Father says we need not fear that the Spaniards will succeed in working us any real harm through the Indians so long as we have the powerful friendship of the Cacique of Stono."

"Oh, the Cacique of Stono!" exclaimed Charles, and grinned broadly at Betty; "godfather and adorer of Mistress Elizabeth Blew, and self-instituted protector of all Dorchester colony in consequence!"

"For shame, Charles," cried Emily, and pelted him with a pine cone that had fallen upon the wall of the fort. "You ought to be pummeled for speaking in that vein of the really beautiful devotion the noble chief entertains for our Betty."

"Have you ever heard the story, Anne, of the beginning of his infatuation for Bess?" asked Charles, still brimming with mischief.

"Nay, I think not. At least I do not recall having done so."

"You don't say to me now that Bess herself has never told you?" and Charles held up his hands in mock astonishment.

"Bess herself has assuredly never told me," said Anne.

"Such modesty is well-nigh incomprehensible. To think, too, she is my sister!"

"This is the way of it," continued Charles: "We came up the river from Charles Town—that is when we were coming here to plant the colony, I mean—not knowing how the Indians would receive us. One thing we did know, however, the forests were full of them, and a large number were not friendly. Two nearby tribes, the Westoes and Kussoes, had for some time been making threats against the settlers.

"All went well, however, till we were within two or three hours' journey of our destination, when a canoe full of Indians appeared on the river in front of us. It was not that they were so warlike, and there were only six of them, but it was the great annoyance to which they put us. We suspected treachery, too. They declared we must not proceed another mile until we had had an interview with the Cacique of Stono, through whose possessions we were then passing. When it was asked how long it would be ere the Cacique would appear, we were told in the most artless manner that it would not be before morning. Think of that, when it was but little more than noon, and we

were so anxious to reach our destination as speedily as we could!

“The upshot of it was we had to stay there all night. We were afraid not to do it, for the banks of the river soon began to swarm with Indians, and each time we made some excuse to get away we were told that we must wait for the Cacique.

“Well, no harm befell us, and in the morning the Cacique appeared. He came in great state, and soon sent word aboard our vessels that he desired audience with our headmen. Now what do you think happened?”

As Charles asked the question, he turned with a quizzing face toward Betty. She suddenly looked confused.

“I am sure I don’t know,” replied Anne.

“Why, Mistress Betty, then no more than nine years of age, took it into her head that she, too, was going ashore to greet the chief and to tell him how very good of him she thought it to let us pass through his country. How she was aware he was going to let us pass through his country unmolested, I’m sure I can’t tell, for none of us knew it then, and all were in more or less of dread until the result of the interview was announced. But Bess was ever a sly rogue. She

knows how to cajole to this day. I suppose she used some such art upon the chief. Anyhow, Captain Gabriel and father permitted her to go to greet the chief, and shortly our breath was nearly taken away by the intelligence that she had been asked to dine with him, the greatest man of the Kiawhas, first and last of womankind, 'tis said, who ever has done so. Yes, our Bess was really asked to share the feast, the meal of peace, 'twas called, at which the great Cacique of Stono presided, and from that day to this he has been her devoted slave."

"Verily, Charles, you prove yourself a master hand in the art of story telling," remarked Captain Gabriel, his eyes twinkling, "and save for a sly thrust or so at your sister, none can find fault with the manner of delivery. But there's one point of your story at which you veer quite away from the facts, lad, and 'tis really facts, I'm sure, you want to state, apart from your jesting.

"Now, 'twas not our Bess who proposed the visit to the Cacique, though I could see that she did mightily long for it. 'Twas I myself who named it to her and did urge upon your father the wisdom of her going. Nay, never to my dying day will I forget the appearance of our little lass on that morning, when in sweet

trust and innocence she stormed the heart of the chief and won a victory all our speech and tactics could not have accomplished. And," concluded Captain Gabriel in deep solemnity, "the fruits of that victory we enjoy to this day."

As the captain looked at Betty, his handsome eyes shining, his heart went warm within him, flooded by a memory of the sweet childish face on that morning, nearly eight years before, when Betty, with a trust beautiful to see, had gone to meet the great Cacique of Stono, and had conquered him as all the arms of war could not have done.

"The amusing part," said Charles, as he playfully chucked Betty under the chin, "is that our Bess always declared the Cacique was beautiful, that he had the loveliest smile, whereas the truth is he's about as homely an old fellow as you could find in a day's journey through the forests, where homely ones abound on every side. As to that smile, it's about as beautiful as the grin of a bear with the toothache; I do wish you could see it, Anne."

"That comparison won't do," laughed Henry. "To Betty's way of looking at it, even a bear can have 'a beautiful smile.' Have you forgotten the one we met in the field, carrying the stolen ears of roasting

corn? It snarled at us fiendishly, as you well remember, Charles, whereupon Betty declared it was just trying to show us a pleasant smile."

Charles joined in the laugh at his sister's expense.

"How about that, Betty?" he asked.

"Oh, yes," replied Betty, meeting the banter good-naturedly, "I remember very well; Madam Bruin wanted to be polite to us, and I am sure she smiled."

At that moment a sound smote upon their ears, sharp, insistent, then swelling into many sounds deeper and more prolonged.

"What is that?" asked Emily somewhat sharply, and drawing nearer to Captain Gabriel.

Ere any one could reply, there came a second volume of sound; a crashing noise it might more fittingly be described, that increased within the space of a few seconds to a din that assuredly would have been deafening had it been nearer.

"Indian tom-toms and horn trumpets, to say naught of the rattle-gourds of every size!" exclaimed Edward. "I wonder what can be going to happen now?"

He had no more than asked the question when around the curve of the river an Indian canoe shot into view, then came another and another, till the little lake in front of them seemed quite filled with canoes.

The canoes were long and slender, the most of them twenty to twenty-five feet in length. Each was constructed of a single trunk of cypress hollowed out, and each contained from ten to twelve Indians, every one evidently having on his best attire.

There was one boat larger by several feet than the others. It was, too, much more elaborately fitted out. A canopy was suspended midway, while streamers of gayly colored cloth and clusters of cedar and laurel boughs ornamented it along the sides.

As the last boat shot around the curve and all were now assembled upon the lake, there came a sudden wild burst, a mighty tornado of sweeping, crashing sound, in which horns and tom-toms vied with each other in ear-splitting din. At the same time a number of Indians in each canoe arose, and facing toward the fort, began swinging their arms in a half circle above their heads.

"Oh, what is it?" gasped Anne, clinging to Captain Gabriel. "What does it all mean? Is it an Indian attack?"

Betty put her arm about her, smiling reassuringly.

"Nay, dear, 'Tis but a friendly demonstration. They are coming on a visit, and in fine style, too," she added, her eyes twinkling.

“In short,” said Charles, with a merry look at Betty, “’tis no less a personage than the great Cacique of Stono himself, and he is coming in all this grand array simply to welcome on her return from Boston Town his adopted daughter, Mistress Elizabeth Blew.”

“In that case, then,” said Captain Gabriel, and giving Betty a sly pinch of the cheek, “let us hasten down to greet the chief as he lands. ’Tis more than likely that this is his purpose, since he has been constantly enquiring through the many weeks past as to when our Betty would return. Well, lass, this is indeed a great honor for thee, but methinks ’twill by no means turn thy head.”

Betty blushed, then said demurely, “I’ll wait, uncle, till I see that the Cacique’s visit is really intended for me, ere I begin to let my head grow big in consequence. ’Tis more than likely that he is coming in this grand style to call upon you, Uncle Gabriel, and other head-men of the town. No doubt ’tis because he has some favor to ask.”

“Not at all likely, lass,” declared Captain Gabriel with a shake of the head, “since the Cacique is not given to asking favors. Nay, my Bess, ’twill very shortly be proven that the great chief has come in this

fine style simply to do honor to our dear and modest little lass, Mistress Elizabeth Blew."

So it proved, as the chief himself very quickly gave evidence.

By the time the party from the walls reached the landing, the canoes had appeared in the wide curve of the river just above the fort, and were approaching the shore in two graceful half circles, an inner and an outer one.

On they came till within fifty yards of the landing, when they began to maneuver so that the two half circles drew apart, forming an almost perfect circle about the largest boat, in which the chief and his great men sat. There was just space enough at the upper end of the circle for the Cacique's boat to pass through and on to the landing. Two young men sprang ashore, and amid a blare of horns, made the chief's boat fast to the great cypress posts. Then the canopy was borne forward and a covering of skins was laid over the spot where the chief would land.

By this time a large crowd of the villagers had gathered upon the river bank, for the news of the grand approach of the Cacique had quickly spread. Smith, carpenter, woodman, clerk, porter had alike left his work. Even the good dames deserted for a time

the cooking of the noonday meal, and servants and children with wide-open eyes and gaping mouths added greatly to the concourse on the bank.

All made way for Betty, for soon it was understood that this grand demonstration on the part of the great Cacique of Stono was every bit in honor of the return from Boston Town of their young townswoman, Mistress Betty Blew. Well, she was indeed a true and bonny lass, almost every one admitted, and fully deserving of all the honor the great chief could bestow. He had been their friend again and again, and chiefly because of his devotion to this young girl, who nearly eight years before, when but a child of nine, had stormed and won his heart, and had held it ever since.

CHAPTER VI

THE FEAST UNDER THE OAKS

As the chief landed, his color-bearers advanced, and with them four young men who quickly spread another covering of skins upon the ground. It was here that Betty was received by the chief, while the bearers held above them the great white canopy formed chiefly of the white feathers of the crane and heron. Along its edges were sprigs of laurel and cedar, and surmounting all a stuffed pigeon, snow white, a branch of laurel in its beak.

Betty's eyes were shining, and her cheeks were flushed, as she went forward to greet the chief, but apart from this she showed no trepidation. Two priceless qualities our Betty had, tranquillity and courage, and each served her well now.

"Are you not frightened, dear?" Anne had whispered to her, as the Cacique's runners had made known to Captain Gabriel the purpose of the chief's visit, and he had repeated the request to Betty. Anne's own voice was shaking, and her face had lost every

vestige of color. "It seems to me very risky, cousin, to go there in the midst of all those Indians. Suppose, now, there is some trick," and Anne shuddered at what the word implied.

Betty smiled. "That's foolishness, Anne. We all know the Cacique of Stono too well by this time."

Yet, as she stepped forward to meet him Betty's heart was beating quite fast; but it was not with fear. The more rapid heart-beat was due to an exhilarating pleasure, to an honest pride, too, born of the thought that all this the chief had done for her sake. He had come far and in great state that he might show his appreciation of and fondness for his adopted daughter.

She went forward, dropping him a graceful courtesy as she was within a few feet of him, and another as she came nearer, and his own hand was outstretched to draw her beneath the canopy.

As she stood before him, looking trustfully into his face, her eyes shining with pleasure, her cheeks flushed, the sweet firm lines of mouth and chin quivering now just the least bit, he suddenly placed both hands upon his heart and bent toward her, as the great Cacique of the Kiawhas had never bent before to man or woman.

All about them the crowd pressed, some agape and

curious, others showing their great pleasure at the honor that was being done their young townswoman, their eyes misty in sympathy with hers. She had removed her hood. Her hair lay against her forehead in little shining rings. Her chin was uplifted, and she was regarding the chief with a face of sweet seriousness, touched with wonder now as he made her this obeisance.

With a quick little cry of appreciation she reached for one of his hands, and, getting possession of it, began to press it between both of hers. The chief's eyes, too, were shining now. He spoke a word which other ears besides Betty's caught. The word was "*Nonyau*," and it meant, "My daughter." Betty had heard it before, but it seemed to her the chief had never spoken it with so much of meaning as now.

Suddenly the color went deeper in Betty's cheek, indeed, her face seemed aflame, for the Cacique, still with that look of deep pleasure which brightened his stolid face wonderfully, had spoken again. "*Yauwee cannee*" were the words this time, and Edward, who, at the Cacique's request, had approached to interpret for him, told her with a very straight face their meaning, "My beautiful daughter."

Charles, who had pressed as near as he dared, and

that was near enough to hear what was being said, gave a little whoop as he heard Edward's translation, and from that time forth Betty was never to hear the end of "*Yauwee cannee*," so far as Charles was concerned.

But not yet had the chief gotten to the end of the fond things his heart was running over with the desire to say to Betty. As he squatted on the pile of skins, and she took the seat beside him that he indicated, he said the most endearing of all, "*Cun-rie har-ree yau-wee*," and that meant, "The daughter that I love."

After he had expressed to Betty all the fondness that was in his heart for her, and all the kindness that he felt, too, toward her people, and had told her again and again how rejoiced he was that she had come back safely from the town away up the great water, the chief signified the pleasure it would be to him to receive others of those gathered about who desired to speak to him. They came gladly, for the Cacique was a favorite with them all. He had shown them many kindnesses, and they knew he was ready at any time to give them his aid, and that it was very powerful aid they were well aware. They not only greeted him and showed their pleasure at doing so, but they had many nice things to say to him through Edward

Blew, who had spent many years among the Indians and knew their languages well.

When it came Anne's time to greet the Cacique, she having been spurred by Charles to this point of courage, her knees trembled so that she could scarcely walk. Charles volunteered to support her, but at the most critical juncture basely deserted her. Poor Anne, shaking with apprehension, of what, she could not clearly define, felt herself walking very unsteadily, and just at the moment when she had need of her surest balance, her foot caught in one of the skins, and down she went at full length, her feet giving Betty a pounding blow upon one shoulder, her head landing plump in the lap of the astonished Cacique.

There came a howl from Charles that would have done credit to any of the Indians around him, and an answering one from Henry Roddey that fortunately was feebler, or the chief and his men might have thought a rival band had suddenly appeared.

Poor Anne! as Edward picked her up, after a desperate effort to free certain strands of her silky hair from the metal and shell fringe of the Cacique's deerskin dress, she looked as though she would gladly sink again, but now completely through the earth.

By this time, however, the chief understood that it

had been an accident, that the young girl had caught her foot under one of the skins, and that she was very much mortified because of her fall. He spoke words to reassure her, and in a few moments Anne not only felt at ease again, but she retired filled with astonishment that any Indian amid such wild surroundings could show himself as gentle and pleasing as had the Cacique of the Kiawhas.

Charles was ready with a rapid fire of teasing words.

"Aren't you ashamed of yourself now, Anne? Fie! fie! to try to do such broad poaching upon Betty's preserves. Why, Anne, 'tis truly overcoming to think how you literally threw yourself at the chief, and then not satisfied with that had to get yourself hung hard and fast to him by the hair. 'Tis a wonder he didn't reach for his knife then and there and take, without further ceremony, that pretty scalp-lock of yours. You must admit, Anne, that he showed wonderful forbearance. I think it was only Betty's presence that saved you, for the Cacique would rather lose his own scalp, I verily believe, than to give offense to our Betty."

"He certainly dotes on her," replied Anne good-naturedly, and giving Charles's ear a pull because of his pert words. She could afford to laugh with him



IT WAS BETTY'S OWN HANDS THAT FASTENED IT ABOUT THE CHIEF'S NECK. — *Page 87.*

now, for the last ten minutes had robbed her of all dread of the great Cacique of Stono. The other Indians with him might be dreadful, but he was not. "He even smiled at me," she afterwards declared, though she could never get any one else but Betty to believe the assertion.

The Cacique, for Betty's sake, had brought the villagers a great offering of corn, yams, pumpkins, and venison; and for Betty, individually, there was a big roll of wolf and deerskins, and a collection of beautifully dyed baskets that, when sold, would make her quite a rich young lady indeed. Betty, too, had a present for the Cacique. Indeed, she had brought it all the way from Boston Town, where she had obtained the material for its making. It was a collar of wampum, beautifully wrought with beads and with a fringe of elks' teeth. Charles had been sent home on the run for it as soon as the Cacique appeared. It was Betty's own hands that fastened it about the chief's neck, for he would have it so.

Only a part of the Cacique's men had come ashore with him, the greater number remaining in the boats. When the greetings to the chief were over, Captain Gabriel, Mr. Roddey, and Edward entered a canoe, and, going out to where the boats of the Indians were

anchored, rowed from one to the other, throwing a handful of beads into each as they passed. This was the sign of friendship. In addition to this, they gave to the occupants of each boat as they drew near to it the invitation to come ashore. As the beads were thrown into the boat, each Indian would grunt his approval, exclaiming, "*Bonny! bonny! bonny!*" That meant "Good! good! good!"

The only incident that threatened to mar the harmony of the day was when Simon Dale, the Blews' hired man, overcome with delight at the honors shown Mistress Betty by the great Cacique of Stono, slapped his thighs and roared lustily. Thereupon the Indians in his neighborhood, thinking he had been taken with an evil spirit, scattered to right and left, uttering weird cries. Happily, Mr. Blew was near, and, soon comprehending the nature of the outbreak, succeeded very shortly in restoring serenity again.

The good dames now hurried to their homes, and the dinner, which had been boiling and baking and stewing to appease the appetites of the villagers, was brought and hospitably spread upon the grass for the delectation of the Indians. The villagers could well afford to do this, in view of the liberal stores the Indian boats had brought to them.

The feast was spread on the grass beneath the overhanging boughs of two great oaks, one of which yet remains looking down upon the gray, dismantled fort and the winding dark current of the Ashley. The women and girls served the meal, and a royal feast it was, though the Indian guests had taken the good housewives by surprise. But Mrs. Blew had spoken truly when she had stated to Anne Sumner that the colony was one of plenty, and that the Dorchester settlers had never known hunger from the day of their arrival. This meal gave strong emphasis to her words. There were baked yams and stewed yams, venison, ribs of beef and of pork, corn cakes, hominy, rice, and squash pies, which latter the Indians especially liked. For drink there was fresh sweet cider, milk, and a drink made of honey and flax.

The chief would have Betty near to him. He scarcely wanted to take food from the hands of any one else. Charles hovered near, finding his chief delight in teasing Betty.

"If you don't mind," he said, "that old Indian will be wanting to come and take you back with him to live in his wigwam and to wait on him for good, like any other daughter of a tyrannical Indian daddy, though he be chief. For they're all alike, Betty, high

and low ; a woman's a slave for them, and nothing more. Now, wouldn't you look fine, carrying a papoose, a roll of skins, or a newly slain deer on your back?"

"I didn't know you were a poet, Charles," remarked Betty, smiling at him quite as delightedly as he had smiled at her the moment before.

"I a poet?" repeated Charles in astonishment. "Why, where do you get ground for that assertion?"

"Right in your own words, said no more than a moment ago, Master Charles. Hear them, how they jingle together!

"'They're all alike, Betty, high and low. A woman's a slave for them, and nothing more.'"

Betty threw back her head and laughed again, while Charles was so disconcerted that he failed altogether to get in his usual quick retort.

After the remains of the feast were taken away, and the women and girls had withdrawn to the houses, long-stemmed pipes were brought out and sweet-scented tobacco. As the men of the village and the Cacique and his men sat and talked together, pledges of friendship were renewed, and once again the great Cacique of the Kiawhas, because of the love he bore to one

pale-faced maiden among them, declared that no harm should befall the settlers of Dorchester so long as the power was his to prevent it.

"You should have heard him," said Mr. Blew to his wife that evening. "It truly made my eyes grow misty and my heart swell with pride to think it was our own lass of whom he was speaking. It is easy to see that she has crept into the very corners of his heart. What makes it the more beautiful is that his affection for her is as reverential as it is deep."

"It does indeed make my heart glad to see his great devotion to our Betty," and the mother wiped a sudden mist from her eyes. "And to think what he is ready to do for us because of it!"

"Our lass is truly deserving of it all!" declared Mr. Blew. "No father and mother ever had sweeter and truer. God bless her!"

"That is so, Philip," Mrs. Blew replied, her whole heart shining in her eyes as she agreed with him. "'Twas truly a blessed day for us when, nearly seventeen years ago, God sent us our little Betty."

The Cacique's visit continued to be a lively topic of conversation throughout the village for several days. Among the young people it proved especially so. It seemed as if their tongues could not wag sufficiently

fast in discussing it. Of course, all the girls envied Betty, while the boys, almost to a unit, felt like pounding Charles because of the outrageous manner in which he had teased his sister. Henry was one of the two or three exceptions. He seemed to take a peculiar delight in helping Charles in the effort to bring a blush to Betty's cheek, or to make her look suddenly confused.

Emily took indignant issue with Henry because of this disloyalty to Betty, as she termed it.

"You and Charles ought both to be ashamed of yourselves," she declared. "The way you two boys go on puts Betty at a disadvantage. Therefore it isn't just to her. I do wish you would quit it," plead loyal Emily. "If you could see how provoking it made you, I am sure you would."

Emily might as well have thrown water on a duck's back, expecting it to stay there, as to have had hope that her words would prove of any effect upon these two mischievous boys. Poor Anne, too, came in for her share of the torment. Allusion had but to be made to her meeting with the Cacique for Charles particularly to go off into roars of laughter and to say all kinds of teasing things. He vowed that he was going to send an account back to Boston Town, so that it

might appear in the *News Letter* and be read by all Mistress Anne's acquaintances.

"What a fund of amusement it will offer," continued aggravating Charles, "to learn how the fastidious Mistress Anne Sumner came all the way to the wilds of Carolina to throw her charming self literally at the feet of the homeliest old Indian for miles around, only to be repulsed by him!" and Charles "ha-haed" and "he-hawed" at this joke as though it were the greatest one that had ever been made.

Anne and Betty took this teasing in a fairly good-natured way. The hope was keen with them that sometime, perhaps, before a great while, they could get even with both boys.

The Cacique, on taking his departure at the time of his visit of state to Betty, had lingered for some additional words with Mr. Blew. This had given rise to the declaration on the part of mischievous Charles that the chief was endeavoring even then to arrange terms with Mr. Blew for the sale of Betty.

"He has offered three ponies and two calves, I am sure," declared Charles, "for I saw father shake his head five times, once for each one; two vigorous nods declining the calves, and three feebler ones the ponies. I am of the opinion that if the Cacique had said five

ponies and left the calves out, father would have favorably considered his offer."

"Charles, you are real wicked," declared Daniel, frowning at his brother and running to put his arms around Betty's neck and give her a kiss. "Yes, you are wicked, Charles, because you are telling what is not true. You know well enough that father wouldn't sell our sweet sister Betty for any price."

"You just wait until the old Indian comes after her, and then you'll see."

"But he came to-day, and he didn't get her," announced Daniel triumphantly, and hugging Betty tighter and tighter till she had to beg for mercy.

"He didn't bring the ponies, that was the reason. Wait until he comes back with them, then you'll see what will happen."

"Our Betty wouldn't go away from us for all the Indians in the world!" declared Daniel. "Would you, sister?"

"Nay, darling, that I would not. Charles is but teasing you, so pay no attention to him."

"But she went away to Boston Town and left us," continued Charles.

"That was because father and mother wanted her to go. Why, they sent her *there*," concluded Daniel, and

looking at Charles in a way that said plainly that this was conclusive and ended all discussion as to this point.

“Well, they’ll send her to live with old Ne-pis-saw-nee when he brings the ponies; you’ll see if they don’t!”

“For shame, Charles,” cried Betty indignantly, “to tease a child so. You can have your fun with me whenever it suits you, because I understand it, but ’tis truly shameful of you to torment Daniel so, and on such a serious subject.”

“Oh, he is a little ninny if he takes that seriously,” commented Charles as he turned and walked away, whistling.

The visit of Ne-pis-saw-nee, Chief of the Kiawhas, and the renewal of his pledge to give to the settlers of Dorchester all the aid in his power in the event of an attack instigated by the Spaniards, caused conversations relative to that relentless foe to break out afresh.

Mr. Blew was one of those who looked upon a Spanish invasion not only as a possibility, but a probability.

“In my opinion,” he said, the night following the Cacique’s visit, “the Spaniards will come in person the next occasion. They have learned by this time that their efforts to incite the Indians against us do not turn out in the satisfactory manner they hoped to see. The

Indians are unreliable factors, as wily and treacherous as the Spaniards themselves. They give their word but to break it at the first opportunity of benefit to themselves. Besides, the different bands are at war with each other, and no force large enough for our annihilation can be brought by the Spaniards to the point of working in harmony."

"You believe, do you not, father?" asked Edward, "that they will seek an alliance with the French for the reduction of the colony?"

"Yes, my son, that is very evident. Not only will they seek to destroy the settlements throughout this Province and to slay and scatter the settlers, but the other colonies will suffer, and suffer greatly, too, I fear me.

"At each end of our chain of colonies," continued Mr. Blew, "there is a hostile post. At the north are the French in Canada, watching with jealous eyes the steady growth of the young English settlements. At the south are our bitter foes, the Spaniards, treacherous, implacable, sworn to exterminate every English settlement at the first opportunity. To them it makes no difference if war or peace exists between England and Spain; their hatred of us is the same; their intent to bring disaster upon us abides."

“’Tis a wonder that the French in Canada have remained so long quiet,” said Edward, after a pause, “when ’tis well known they have covetous eyes upon much of the New England territory.”

“’Tis not from consideration they hold back, you may rest assured,” declared Mr. Blew. “But the New England colonists are comparatively safe from the invasions of the French, since such invasion must, of necessity, be made overland. On account of the climate, this is practically restricted to but one season of the year. As to our own condition,” here Mr. Blew paused as though weighing his words and the effect they might have upon his hearers, especially the more timid ones, “well, we are liable to invasion at any time. We have no heavy snows, in fact, we have little snow at all, and our streams are never frozen over.”

“I think we are going to have some sure-enough snow this winter,” remarked Charles suddenly, “anyhow, I hope so fervently. I’m tired of the little sprinkles we’ve been having, that don’t lie on the ground thick enough for a blanket to cover grasshoppers.”

“Oh, you funny boy!” exclaimed Anne. “What made you think of that ridiculous comparison?”

“I suppose because it was the first one that came to

hand. Then, I have seen the dead grasshoppers lying on the ground when there wasn't enough snow to cover them."

"Oh, those were the lazy fellows," piped out Daniel, "who wouldn't work to get themselves feed, and so starved when the snow came."

"What makes you think it is going to snow this winter?" asked Betty, looking at Charles. She had seen more than one glorious snow in Boston Town, and was longing for the sight of one here.

"Oh, because of one or two things. For one, some of the birds that usually stay around here all winter have flown away further south. I saw a whole flock of them go one day this week. For another thing, the cranes are beginning to put an extra wall around their homes; and most conclusive proof of all, as Elder Pratt says, is that ever so many times the wood, after it begins to burn, snaps and crackles as though it had salt thrown upon it. Oh, I know it is going to be unusually cold this winter," concluded Charles, and showing his delight at the prospect. "I for one hope it will be cold enough to make a polar bear dance for joy."

"I think *you* will be the polar bear," said Anne slyly.

CHAPTER VII

A MEAN SPIRIT

WHILE Betty had been absent in Boston Town, the dearest, cutest baby had come to live with Uncle Gabriel and Aunt Joan. He certainly was a darling, not only to his father's, mother's, and Betty's way of thinking, but to that of every baby lover who saw him. They thought him a darling because he had such a lovely disposition. When but a morsel of humanity, hardly big enough to hold comfortably, he had puckered up his tiny red face far oftener into a smile than a frown, and his mother and other adoring ones declared that he had never been known to cry except for stomach-ache or a pin that scratched him deeply.

He was now a lusty, crowing little man of a full year of age, and his red puckered face had grown into a velvety smooth and beautifully tinted one, with the cunningest dimples in cheeks and chin that ever a baby possessed.

"There was never before such a 'smiley eyes and pinkie toes,'" Betty declared, "unless it was our own

baby Drusilla, and even she did not have quite such cunning ways."

This little man's name in full was Philip Gabriel May, in honor of father and uncle-in-law, and that he was the pride of his father's eyes and the joy of his mother's heart goes without saying. It was a delight to see how scrupulously clean she kept him. Twice a day he was bathed, then rubbed and polished till his skin shone like a June pippin.

"If you don't mind, Aunt Joan," said Betty laughingly one day, "you will scrub and rub till there won't be any of our 'smiley eyes and pinkie toes' left."

"No danger of that," replied Mrs. May, as she returned the smile, "he's been rubbed and scrubbed in this way a round five hundred times, and there's still a good twenty-five pounds of him left."

"That's so, Aunt Joan, and I suppose by the time he's been scrubbed and rubbed another five hundred times, he will have perhaps another score and more of pounds to his credit."

"I hope so, Betty."

"'Tis too bad, is it not, Aunt Joan, the way the Indian mothers treat their babies?" said Betty after a pause. "I doubt if some of the poor little things get fully bathed once in a twelvemonth. They look so

uncomfortable! But they are cunning, even in their dirt, and how knowingly they blink their eyes when you speak to them!"

"That reminds me," began Aunt Joan, and eyes as well as lips showed a smile. "Just the day before yesterday, as I was right in the midst of baby Philip's bath, who should come in but your old friend, Dom-be-di-e-ty. You remember her, do you not, Betty?"

There was something of mischief in Aunt Joan's eyes now as she asked the question.

"That I do, Aunt Joan," replied Betty, blushing a little. "'Twas my meddling with Dom-be-di-e-ty's own baby, my desire to see it nearer and to hold it, that caused me a cold bath in the river. My! how strong her arms were as she seized and threw me in, and all because in my desire to hold the cunning little thing and to look at it more closely, I ran away with her baby. I was but nine years old then, Aunt Joan, as you remember. We had but recently arrived here, and I did not know the Indian ways. 'Tis no wonder Dom-be-di-e-ty, thinking I had stolen her baby out of pure wantonness, sought to punish me as she did."

"It was cruel and wicked of her," declared Aunt Joan. "I must say that, even if she was an untaught savage. She meant to drown you, and would have

done so but for Gabriel's fleetness and strength. How many times since have I blessed God for that strength and fleetness. I smiled a little while ago, Betty; that was because of the thought that came to me of the curiosity you had concerning Indian babies, and the many quaint, cunning things you said and did in connection with them. You were that wild to hold one, I remember, you could scarcely contain yourself. But when I think, darling, how the effort to gratify your curiosity nearly cost you your life, my heart is grave indeed."

"Oh, that was long ago, dear aunt, and here I am still, your own bad Betty, though grown tall and big now. But what was it you were going to tell me about Dom-be-di-e-ty? She came, you said, while you were bathing baby Philip."

"Yes, she walked in," replied Aunt Joan, and smiling again, "as I had baby Philip completely stripped, and sitting in his little tub, I was dipping the water with both hands and pouring it over him, and he was crowing with lusty delight, when Dom-be-di-e-ty came in. She stopped in utter amazement, and one need never say again that an Indian can't display great emotion. If ever you saw astonishment, indignation, and horror depicted upon a face in fullest evidence, they

were mingled upon Dom-be-di-e-ty's at that moment, and for many moments following.

“ ‘ Kill! kill! kill!’ she cried, then actually dropped upon the floor as though her legs were too weak to support her further. As she sat with her feet crossed under her and rocking back and forth, she kept on pointing at the baby and repeating that one English word, ‘ kill,’ with ever so many more in her own language. Then I knew she meant that if I persisted in covering baby Philip's nude body with such copious draughts of water, I would assuredly kill him. Finally she conveyed to me the information that the only really safe and healthful way to give him a bath in cool weather was to smear him with butter and, placing him in front of the fire, rub him vigorously till it had all melted and soaked in.”

Betty laughed until the room rang with the echoes, while baby Philip, recognizing the gleeful spirit, joined in bravely.

“ Of course, you will take her advice, Aunt Joan,” said Betty, so soon as she could control her mirth. “ Now I know why those poor little wretched babies look as if the dirt was fairly smeared in, put on in layers, in fact, and glued there. ’Tis no wonder they take cold when one now and then is really bathed.”

While Betty had been talking, Aunt Joan had gone to place baby Philip in his crib, which was near to one of the two small windows of the room. The little fellow loved the sparkle of the sunshine through the tiny panes of glass. He cackled gleefully as he tried to catch the shining sunbeams between his fingers, but found he could not.

As Mrs. May raised herself from the stooping posture over the crib, she glanced out of the window, as was usual with her. As she did so on this occasion, an annoyed exclamation escaped her.

“What is it, Aunt Joan?” asked Betty quickly.

“’Tis Master Jonas Pettibone again! I wonder what he can want now. Really, I am glad that Gabriel is not here on this occasion, for the last time Master Pettibone came there were words spoken by him that made Gabriel very angry. When I questioned him he would not tell me, saying they were really of no consequence after all. That did not satisfy me; for if the words were of no consequence, why did they make Gabriel so angry?”

“Master Pettibone is truly a disagreeable person, Aunt Joan. I am sure Uncle Gabriel is not the only one who could complain of irritating words. Master Pettibone seems to take a peculiar delight

in making every one feel ill at ease. If he doesn't mind, he will soon find himself without a friend left."

"If that isn't the case already," said Aunt Joan. "But there he is, rapping and rapping as though every one in the house were as deaf as a pumpkin. Will you please go down to him, Betty dear, and see what he is after now? I have sent Huldah to the Roddeys', and she'll not be back under a half hour. I would go myself, but I know I should be easily tempted to say something sharp to him, and that would display neither wisdom nor politeness."

Betty rose quickly at her aunt's request, and started toward the door, but it was not very willingly. She, too, disliked Master Pettibone, though she could not quite have told why, for as yet none of his disagreeableness had been visited upon her. So far, all that she knew of his irritating ways was from hearsay. Report painted him as a grasping, covetous, and discontented individual, who had a chronic aversion to seeing another more prosperous than himself.

As Betty opened the door, Master Pettibone showed that he was somewhat taken aback. He fumbled for his handkerchief, then, pretending that his nose needed attention, asked curtly:

"Where's Gabriel May? I expected to find him here."

"If you mean Uncle Gabriel," replied Betty, in crisp tones, and making no effort to hide her indignation, "he's in Charles Town to-day, and will not return before to-morrow."

Master Pettibone's manner was not only impolite, but decidedly irritating. He had not only failed to say "good-morning" to her, but he had accosted her as though she were a servant, and high-spirited Betty was stung by the fact. She forgot her usual caution, the serenity of manner upon which she was wont to fall back on all such irritating occasions. Unheeded, too, were the words spoken by Aunt Joan, when sending Betty in her stead, "I would be easily tempted to say something sharp to him, and that would display neither wisdom nor politeness." Alas, that Betty should so speedily betray Aunt Joan's trust!

As he received her answer, Master Pettibone replaced his handkerchief and stared at Betty a moment, his face showing a sudden, vague anxiety. Then he ejaculated, more in questioning of himself than of Betty:

"I wonder what he's gone there for? Can it be now that they have found some way to patch up the

thing?" These last words he mumbled to himself, so that Betty did not altogether catch them, but she had heard the first sentence very clearly, and was on the point of replying to it when he asked again, and this time direct of Betty:

"What's the Captain gone to Charles Town for? Do you know, lass? Come, if you do, I want you to out with it, you hear? and that without wasting any precious time. I'm in a hurry this morning."

"Indeed, Master Pettibone," replied Betty, her indignation increasing, "I haven't the remotest idea as to why my Uncle Gabriel went to Charles Town. He does not make a point of telling me his business. If you are so anxious to know, you'd better ask him yourself on his return."

Betty had no sooner said these words when she was sorry for them. They were not only unnecessary, but they were rude. She recognized that quickly enough, and it wounded her kind heart sorely to think that she had been disrespectful to one much older than herself, though his manner to her had been so shameful. She was on the point of speaking a little more graciously, when he said with a sudden snap:

"Keep a civil tongue in your head, you hear me? You'll do it, if you know what's good for you! 'Twon't

serve you and yours, let me tell you, those high-and-mighty airs you are assuming. I suppose you learned 'em in Boston Town. 'Twas a powerful waste of good money to send you there, and so I've taken it on myself to tell Blew again and again. But much he cared for the advice; took it 'bout like you did that I gave you a moment ago, with a toss of the head, and a look saying plainly, 'Keep your observations to yourself, for all they'll amount to with me!' though I must say Blew's eyes didn't snap quite as yours did.

"Now, see here, lass," he went on in somewhat milder tones, though his manner was still very irritating, and his steely-blue eyes had an unpleasant gleam, "if you and yours think you are going to run this Dorchester colony to suit yourself, that it is to the furtherance of your own pleasure and worldly interests, the sooner you get over the idea the better it will be for you. There's your father now—every one can see that he is getting rich right and left. Do you know how he does it? I presume not, or you wouldn't hold your head so high. 'Tis because——"

"Master Pettibone," said Betty, with a sudden dignity and a flash of the eye it was good to see, "you can say what further you have to say of me, and I'll not stop you, but when you turn your tongue to abuse

of my father, then do you indeed go beyond what I'll either permit or endure; truly not here upon the threshold of those who both believe in and love him. You can take your vilification of my father elsewhere, Master Pettibone. Allow me to close the door, if you please, and to say good-morning."

Having delivered herself of these words, our Betty, as spirited a lass when once fully aroused as all Dorchester could produce, endeavored to put her speech into effect by closing the door in Master Pettibone's face. But, as Master Pettibone still kept his hand firmly planted against the jamb, she found it impossible to dislodge him sufficiently to carry out her purpose without a downright piece of rudeness, in which our Betty could not permit herself to indulge. Therefore, not knowing what the better to do, she now turned away from him, and at the same moment Aunt Joan's voice was heard calling to her from the doorway of bedroom:

"Why are you and Master Pettibone talking in such loud tones, Betty? And what is the meaning of some of the words I have heard? It cannot be now that there is aught of argument between you?"

"Master Pettibone has been inquiring as to Uncle Gabriel, Aunt Joan," said Betty steadily, as she ad-

vanced toward her aunt, who was now in the hall, "and he is not well pleased to find that uncle is absent, especially that he is absent in Charles Town."

"Well, for that matter," said Mrs. May, and she spoke in a placid voice, "since your uncle will return by noon to-morrow, Master Pettibone will not have long to wait for the matter of business with him."

"But far longer than 'tis pleasing to me to wait, madam," said Master Pettibone irritably.

He had come within now, and was taking a seat in the hall.

"It seems to me," he continued, and now his pudgy face had a frown that enhanced its homeliness to the extent of making it absolutely forbidding, "that your husband is always from home when he's wanted, and that he's taken a mighty fancy of late for going to the city."

"My husband's business is such that it necessitates his going to Charles Town at least two or three times a month, Master Pettibone," said Mrs. May, with dignity. "He is there to-day because he has been called to Charles Town to meet with the Commission of Defense, on whose shoulder rests the responsibility of the safety of every man and woman, not only in this

colony, but throughout the province; your own safety, Master Pettibone, as well as that of others."

Mild Aunt Joan felt obliged to give him that thrust. Both his words and manner were outrageously exasperating.

"Oh, well enough!" commented Jonas Pettibone, and with a leer he might have intended for a smile. "That's no doubt all right in the main. But the Commission, I'm thinking, will not sit for a full day, or if it does, there's sure to be a recess between sessions, during which Captain Gabriel would have ample time to attend to any little affair of his own, or for another now, if he cared to do it."

"Of course, my husband will attend to any little matter it pleases him, either for himself or a neighbor," replied Mrs. May. She was still preserving her dignity, but there was a note of indignation in her voice now, impossible to mistake.

"If that is all you have to say to us, Master Pettibone," she continued, and inclining her head, "allow us to bid you good-morning."

"Not so fast, Madam May," and with a most provoking smile now, "I must first have your permission to sit and smoke here a while. A keen wind is blowing without, and 'twould not be so comfortable as here.

There's a three-mile walk up the river before me," he continued, as a nod from Mrs. May signified that he might proceed as he pleased, "and I must have the solace of my pipe first."

He took that article from his pocket as he spoke, and, fitting a stem to it, began to blow through the latter to free the bowl of ashes.

It was a very peculiar pipe, and as he thus held it to view, both Mrs. May and Betty saw it plainly. As for Betty, her eyes seemed fascinated by it. She had cause afterward to remember the impression it made upon her.

Noting Betty's intent gaze, Master Pettibone said, and with something of real pleasantness in his manner now :

"Looking at my pipe, I see, Mistress Betty. Handsome, isn't it? It came from over the seas, and was a present to a great-great-uncle of mine, and from the King himself."

Master Pettibone got up and, flourishing the pipe, made them a bow and gave them a look which said plainly that there were others beside themselves who could boast of high family connections.

"I'd not part from this pipe easily, as you may suppose," he said, as he sat down again. "Nay,

'twould be a mighty favor indeed that would wring it from me."

"He asked to smoke there just to annoy us, I am sure," Betty said to Aunt Joan as they had returned again to the room, leaving Master Pettibone puffing away like a kiln of tar, and filling all the hall with clouds of smoke.

"Yes, I know it, dear; but there was naught to do save to give him permission. Methinks he would have done it anyhow, without waiting for agreement from me. When he thinks he has annoyed us sufficiently by filling the house with reeking smoke, then he will take his departure."

"But why should he want to annoy us, aunt, think you?"

"I do not know, Betty, save 'tis purely from a mean spirit. 'Tis said his wife keeps a slovenly place, and that it angers him to see other housewives with tidy premises."

"I believe, aunt," said Betty, after a moment's thought, "that his spite against us lies in something deeper. I am positive he does not like my father."

"He really likes no one, my Betty, for that matter."

"But his spite is particularly deep against father. I know it, for he said things that intimated it plainly. His manner was very offensive. Oh, aunt, at one time he did try me so, that I quite forgot myself, and was very rude to him."

"Well, 'twas because you could not help it, I know, my Betty. Do not worry, dear heart. I am sure you did no more than any high-spirited girl would have done under the circumstances. That man is truly an exasperation, a dreadful one, in fact. I had fairly to bite my tongue at one time to keep from ordering him out of the house."

Aunt Joan paused a moment as though taking careful note of her words, ere she continued:

"The worst about it is that I am of the opinion that he could be guilty of almost any detestable trick to win an end."

"It is dreadful, then, that he should hate my father," said Betty, with a shudder.

"I did not mean, dear, that the man would raise his hand to do bodily hurt," said Aunt Joan quickly, as she noted the effect of her previous speech upon Betty. "Nay, lass, 'tis only that I believe him capable of low work to accomplish a desire. The power that would move him in every case is greed."

"Aunt, why do you think it is that Master Pettibone hates my father?"

Betty had come back again to the one thing uppermost in her mind.

"Perhaps it is not that he really hates him, Betty," said Aunt Joan soothingly. "'Tis no doubt envy that has possession of him. I recall now that I have heard Gabriel say that Master Pettibone has long desired your father's place."

"You mean, aunt, that he wants to be Indian Agent?"

"Yes, Betty, and I recall further that I have heard mention made of the fact that Master Pettibone has for some time been trying to get certain men of standing to influence the Governor in his behalf, but so far he has made little headway."

"But, Aunt Joan, that would not suit the people of Dorchester, nor of any of the neighboring settlements, even if the Governor should consent. My father is very popular with all, while there is scarcely one who has a good word for Master Pettibone."

"That is true, Betty; and I think 'tis the very fact of Brother Philip's popularity that arouses all the meanness of Master Pettibone's small nature. He

would like nothing better than to see your father humbled."

"But that he will never do," declared Betty, with radiant eyes. "He might as well try to make people believe that snow is black as to endeavor to smirch my father's good name."

CHAPTER VIII

LOST CUSTOM

BETTY had had the happiness of helping her father at the warehouse for two whole mornings since her return. She was there again for the third time this morning, and he had made her heart fairly overflow with joy by telling her that he had so much for her to do this time that she might remain with him for the better part of the day. In order to have more time for the work before them, they had even brought their dinner, though the Blew dwelling was but a short walk away. Mr. Blew had given strict orders to Edward, who was in charge of the depot where the skins were weighed and afterward housed while awaiting transportation down the river, that he must not be disturbed, except for a customer with whom the young man could not deal.

Another industry Mr. Blew had within the past two years added to the business of the warehouse. This was a trade in dried meats, principally beef, which, after being thoroughly cured, was packed in casks and

shipped in large quantities to the West Indies. All the Carolina settlers by this time had considerable droves of cattle. So, too, had the Indians. These were allowed to run loose on the plains during the spring and summer, so as to fatten on the abundant grass that prevailed. It was now the last of October, cool weather had come, and the slaughtering had already begun.

This industry Mr. Blew carried on as a private enterprise, though the whole section of country around Dorchester profited by it. Indians and white settlers were alike benefited, for Mr. Blew paid very fair prices, contenting himself with moderate profit. This industry bade fair in time to outrival that of the trade in skins. For this reason those who were jealously watching the interests of the Government, or made a great show of so doing, professed dissatisfaction. After events proved that they were really looking out for their own interests after all, with little or no care as to how the Government account stood.

For managing the trade in skins, of which the Government was the principal beneficiary, Mr. Blew received a percentage. He was very liberal, however, and gave all his neighbors, even the Indians themselves, an opportunity to share in the profits. His very liberal-

ity made him prosperous, for every one far and near, Indian and white alike, brought skins to Mr. Blew; thus his own percentage increased. At least such had been the case to within a short time back. During the past month or two Mr. Blew had begun to note, and to note it with increasing dismay, that some of the Indians and one or two of the white traders were taking their skins elsewhere. A few had even passed him by, going down the river in plain view of the warehouse with bales of skins or piles of dried meat in their canoes. These he afterwards learned had been sold to private dealers at Charles Town, thus decreasing the amount of Government revenue at the Dorchester agency. This had begun to trouble Mr. Blew no little, and he had again and again wondered as to how he could remedy it. He was perplexed, too, to understand the cause of it.

Betty was so happy this morning that now and then she caught herself actually singing while she was at work.

Once her father asked her:

“I wonder now, my lass, if one can really manage to do careful counting and to sing at the same time?”

“Why, yes, Father Blew,” replied Betty promptly,

“ don’t the birds both build and sing at the same time, and who could find fault with their work? ”

Mr. Blew smiled at the argument, but after that, however, every time she found herself indulging in a snatch of song Betty would check herself promptly. It disturbed her father, she feared, although he had smiled about it. He looked greatly abstracted this morning. Betty could see that there was something that had a deep hold on his mind. That it was of a perplexing nature, she could tell plainly by his closely knit brows and the nervous manner in which he now and then rubbed his hands together. She wondered if it were the same trouble or a new one.

Her heart began to beat painfully as she glanced at him. She longed to speak to him of the matter that was troubling him, yet felt restrained. So many times she had sought in loving, anxious way to solve the secret of her father’s trouble, but always he had met her inquiries in such a manner that there was no satisfaction. At times it had seemed to her, too, that her inquiries only distressed him. For some days now she had forbore to question him at all. As she glanced at him now, however, she felt the old desire flood her heart with painful intensity. It was all that she could do to keep from rushing to him, and, throw-

ing her arms about his neck, beseech, nay, demand that he tell her his trouble. Was it not her right to know it, out of her great love for him, if for no other reason?

So intense had been her feeling, so great the effort at restraint, the check put upon herself to keep her from rushing to her father with the demand to know his trouble, that a choking sob, almost a gasp for breath, caught in Betty's throat. The sound was louder than she knew. It attracted her father's attention. He turned his head quickly, but by this time Betty had her own head bent above the account book, apparently in an absorbed way, and Mr. Blew thought he was assuredly mistaken.

The fire at the warehouse had destroyed Mr. Blew's private office, but it had been rebuilt almost upon the same spot. The only difference was that it was joined to the main body of the warehouse now, whereas before it had been connected by a passageway. The only effects saved had been a package or two of old letters, a few receipts of little consequence because out of date, and the identical account book that Betty was engaged with at present. Like the letters and receipts, this book was of only minor importance. It contained merely the regulations by which the skins were purchased; the adjustment of the matter of weights and the scale of

prices. As these varied from time to time and were dependent, too, upon the quality and measurement of certain of the skins, it had to be revised now and then. It was this task that Betty was engaged in, following certain directions her father had previously outlined.

Suddenly an indistinct figure troubled Betty. The book had been saved only after the most desperate effort on her father's part. The flames were already eating their way about it when Mr. Blew snatched it from the desk. He had hoped to save more important ones, and was seeking to do so, when his friends literally dragged him from the burning room. This book that he had saved was considerably scorched and the parchment pages within were several of them turned brown from the heat.

Still in perplexity as to the figure, Betty at last carried the book to her father. He was able from memory to settle the point.

"'Tis a 9, lass," he said.

"I thought so, father, but I was not sure. And the one next to it is a 3, is it not, father?"

"Nay, lass, that is an 8, but an 8 with a portion of it so faint from the scorching it received that it does resemble a 3."

"The whole book is very much scorched," said

Betty, her voice trembling just a little. "Oh, father, that was a dreadful time, was it not?"

"You mean the time of the fire, lass?" he asked, his own voice not quite steady. "That it was, my dear; but as bad as it was, there's many a calamity far worse, Betty."

He was smiling reassuringly at her now, and the smile brightened his sad face wondrously.

"But it might have proven the most awful of calamities to us, father, if only those good friends, Master Portman and Master Roddey, had not rushed in after you and taken you from the burning room. Oh, father, what made you do that? What made you go into the room when it was burning so?"

"Because there were valuable accounts and other books and papers to save, lass."

"But your life, father, is worth all the books and papers in the world! nay, in twenty worlds! Oh, father, think what might have happened had it not been for those good, true friends of yours!" and Betty, with a sob of terror, as though the dreadful thing had really happened, caught him around the neck and hugged him so tight he could scarcely breathe.

After a while, when she had relaxed her hold, she added:

“And to think the books and papers were not saved at last! Truly, father, ’twas a terrible risk for naught.”

“It did not seem for naught, lass. I had great hope of saving them. I did not realize how much the fire had spread.”

“Father,” said Betty suddenly, “have you ever thought that the fire was set?”

He looked away from her a moment ere he replied:

“Well, at times, lass, I must confess that the feeling comes to me that some unfriendly hand might have been the cause of it. There were certain circumstances which caused others beside myself to have the thought, and to express it, too, that the fire could not have come by chance. ’Twas warm weather, as you have heard, and there had been no fire in the office for weeks.”

“But who *could* be *your* enemy, father?”

There was no mistaking the emphasis. He smiled at her loyalty, though he felt his heart grow warm within him because of it, and his arm went about her with closer pressure.

“There is always some one, dear heart, in this world of many natures, to look with disapproval upon those who are prosperous, and to covet that which they

themselves have neither the tact nor the industry to win."

"Do you know of any one, father, who could have been so mean as to set fire to the warehouse because of jealousy of what *you* have accomplished?"

The question came with such suddenness that it took Mr. Blew altogether by surprise, though only a few moments before he had been more than half expecting it.

He flushed slightly, while his eyes sought the floor.

"Please look at me, father, and answer," persisted Betty.

"Why, my child, how can I answer that question?" he said at last. "Think for a moment what it implies."

"But do you *know* of such a one, father?" entreated Betty again.

"Nay, my dear, I assuredly do not *know* that of any one which could connect him with the crime."

"Yet you have suspicions, father; I can see that you have. Yea, your face tells me so plainly now. Do tell me, father. You can trust *me*, do you not know that you can?"

"But suspicions, my Betty, are not facts. Think

you not that it would be a terrible wrong to fasten a crime upon one merely through suspicion?"

"It would indeed be a great wrong to accuse an innocent person, father, but methinks your suspicions are so strong and you have such good ground for them, they amount almost to the proofs."

"Then let us wait, Betty, till they are proofs."

These words Mr. Blew said in such a way that Betty saw plainly that he did not wish her to question him any further as to this point.

She hugged him again tightly, and began to smooth with loving pat the hair at the top of the head, where a slight baldness had begun to appear.

"Never mind, it will all come out some day," she said steadily, "as every bad deed usually does come to light, sooner or later. Then I shall know without your telling me, father." She paused a moment, then added slowly, "But I think I could almost guess now."

"What do you mean, Elizabeth?" Mr. Blew asked suddenly. Whenever he was greatly in earnest or greatly disturbed, he always addressed her as Elizabeth. "Mind, child, how you give breath to such words," he added, ere she had time to reply, even if such had been her desire.

"Oh, daddy, you dear, dear old daddy!" she sud-

denly cried, and throwing her arms in an abandonment of affection about him, "how any one, even one with the meanest of hearts could seek to do *you* harm, I can't, can't see! But of course, he, or they can't harm you! What could they do to hurt your good name, my precious father, when every one knows 'tis pure as the snow that falls?"

"Sweet flatterer!" he said, as he kissed her.

She was picking up the book to return to her work, when suddenly she burst forth:

"Oh, father, dear, you don't know how glad I am that 'twas just past the quarter and all your accounts had been audited by good Master Portman."

"Yes, my dear, it was truly fortunate," he said, but somehow his voice did not sound very steady. Betty, however, gave no heed to this. She was too intent on what she was saying.

"Of course, he gave you the receipt safe enough, father?" said Betty, "and after the fire I've heard it was."

"Yes, he gave me the receipt, lass."

Mr. Blew said no more than this, and as he appeared just then to become very busy, Betty left him after stooping to press a soft kiss upon the cheek which at that moment seemed whiter than usual.

The little office stood at the southern end of the warehouse. There were two small windows, one looking out upon the town, the other upon the river. It was near the latter that Mr. Blew sat, while perched upon a high stool near the former was Betty.

Mr. Blew appeared to be very restless. Almost as soon as Betty left him, he had arisen and was now moving about the room. Betty supposed that he was looking for some papers for reference, and so refrained from questioning him. Soon he stopped in front of the window, and he had been there but a short time when an exclamation escaped him.

Betty turned now.

"What is it, father?" she asked.

"Two canoes are coming, little woman, and each seems to be heavily loaded. There'll be plenty of work for us now, I am thinking."

"But they may not be for us, father," Betty replied, as she, too, came to the window for inspection. "It may be boats belonging to private traders and they are going to Charles Town."

"Nay, I think not so, Mistress Betty. They are the canoes of old Walkulla, unless my eyes do mightily deceive me. The Indian is himself there, I am certain."

"You seem very glad, father."

"That I am, lass. Walkulla and his young hunters are the most successful in the whole section throughout which I trade. They are expert, too, and careful in the preparation of the skins, and rarely ever bring me one that isn't first-class in every respect. Besides, they are well-to-do Indians, keep great droves of cattle, and I am sure are bringing me much of the cured meat, which I now especially desire. Let us go to the landing, lass. It will please the old Indian if I meet him there. He is one of the best sources of my supplies, and 'twould be a sore loss did he, through any whim, make up his mind to desert me."

They left the little office and passed into the warehouse. There Edward joined them, for he, too, had seen the approaching canoes and had recognized Walkulla in the stern of the forward one.

"He's bringing you quite a load this time, father," said Edward, with a smile.

"That he is, my son. Two big canoes full it seems. And if mine eyes do not deceive me he has a quantity of the dried meat I particularly desire."

The two canoes came on steadily, propelled in part by the strong current, leaving little real work for the

four rowers in each. By the time Mr. Blew, Edward and Betty reached the landing, the canoe in the lead was but a few feet from the point where it must turn if the warehouse landing were its destination. But strange to say, the canoe made no movement to turn, but kept straight on.

“What can they be about?” exclaimed Edward. “If they wait until they are fairly abreast of the landing, the current, despite all they can do, will carry them many feet below.”

“I do not believe they are coming to this landing,” said Betty suddenly.

“Why, where else can they be going?” asked Mr. Blew, and his voice had something of a quiver in it.

“Evidently not here, sir, as is very plain to see now,” replied Edward, after a moment.

It was true enough. The boat in the lead neither turned at the usual point nor when abreast of the landing; and neither did the boat following. Both kept right on as though there were no warehouse within a hundred miles for the purchase of such merchandise as they carried.

“I believe they are asleep,” said Betty, and her tones were full of vexation.

"Nay, sister, they are as wide awake as we are," declared Edward.

As if to assert the truth of the declaration three of the Indians turned their faces at this moment toward the group at the landing, and one of them was old Walkulla himself.

Mr. Blew beckoned to him, then sent a merry hail out over the water. But the Indian paid no attention; only continued to stare stolidly toward the landing.

"'Tis no use, sir," said Edward at length to his father; "they seem bent on passing us by. They are going to the city with the goods no doubt. 'Tis too bad, when we want them so and are willing to pay liberally for them! I wonder what can be the matter, father?"

"There's no telling, Edward; some pouting fit of old Walkulla, no doubt."

"But you are always so good to him, sir. I can't see how he ever could have made up his mind to act in that way."

"Perhaps he had help in making up his mind," said Mr. Blew significantly, as he turned away.

Betty heard him sigh, and she was about to follow him and put her hand in his, for sympathy, if for no more, when she heard a laugh which caused her to

stop suddenly and turn in the direction whence it came. There were a half dozen men further up on the bank of the river. They seemed to have met there on their way from their different vocations, but they might have gathered through idleness. At least, they represented the least thrifty element of the town, with but one exception. That exception was Jonas Pettibone. But if he were not hail-fellow-well-met with them usually, he was standing now right in their midst, and talking and gesticulating in a way to make them all grin. He it was who had given the laugh louder than any of the others, the one that had jarred upon Betty so. She could not speak positively as to this laugh, but as she walked on she felt a certainty as to the cause of it that made her heart grow hot within her.

Her father had gone on without noting it. He was too much engrossed with his thoughts evidently. Edward, too, had entered the warehouse very closely behind his father. If he had heard the laugh, he had perhaps attributed it to some remark from one of the group of idlers. To her ear only it had come in all its wicked significance. Master Jonas Pettibone had witnessed old Walkulla's contemptuous treatment of her father, and he had enjoyed it. No doubt the others

had seen it, too, but none of them had laughed as Master Pettibone had. And why? 'Twas easy enough to answer. Because none of them knew the reason of Walkulla's treatment of Mr. Blew as Master Pettibone did!

CHAPTER IX

“NOW, FATHER, WHAT IS IT?”

WITH firm step and a head held proudly erect, Betty passed on toward the warehouse. She would at least show this mean spirit that his shaft of ill-timed humor had fallen short of its mark. If he had intended to sting her father, and she did not doubt it, by his coarse merriment over old Walkulla's disdain of Mr. Blew, this point at least had been missed. Her father had turned away unconscious of it. So, too, had Edward. She alone remained, and though Master Pettibone's boisterous laugh was twice repeated, she paid no heed; only tossing her head a little higher as she passed nearer to him and thence on into the warehouse.

“That's a stiff-necked lass,” he said in loud tones, “and some day she is going to get a fall that will make her smart from head to foot.”

Even these rude words brought no sign from Betty, save a sudden deepening of the color in the cheeks, which as Master Pettibone did not see, he could not enjoy.

Mr. Blew was sitting again in front of his desk.

He had leaned his head upon his hand, and looked greatly depressed. He tried to change his position as soon as he caught sight of Betty, but it was too late. She sprang toward him, and, dropping upon her knees, put her arms around him.

“Oh, father, that was too bad! How could old Walkulla have treated you so? Has he ever done it before?”

“Nay, lass; though the last time he was here there were certain indications that made me somewhat uneasy.”

“What could have occurred to make him treat you so, think you, father?”

“I know not, lass. ’Tis passing strange; for always heretofore, Walkulla has shown the keenest desire to help and please me.”

“Does the taking of the skins and the meat to Charles Town for sale instead of disposing of them here, mean a great deal to you, father?”

He hesitated a moment ere he replied:

“Yes, my Bess, I fear that it does; a very great deal, in fact,” he added after another pause. “’Tis not alone those that old Walkulla himself has carried, but I fear that it means, too, that I shall lose the trade with his people.”

"And would that prove anything of a very serious matter, father?"

"Yes, my lass; especially at this time when the goods are bringing in England and the West Indies the highest prices ever known. 'Tis a clear loss to the Government, my child, every bale and cask that goes out through the private traders. 'Tis a matter of very serious import indeed," he continued, and now it seemed that Mr. Blew having arrived at the point where his burden of care was more than he could endure alone, welcomed the relief of sharing it with another. "'Tis a matter of very serious import indeed, my Betty," he repeated, "especially now when the receipts of the warehouse had begun to fall off as never before."

"Oh, father," exclaimed Betty, a quiver in her voice, "is that true?"

"Sadly true, lass."

"And what has caused it?"

"Ah, Betty, that is a question for which I myself would like to have a satisfactory answer. But one of the reasons is, I think, because I have of late seemed not to have the influence with the Indians I once possessed."

"You have done naught yourself to turn them

against you, I know, father," said Betty with positive voice.

"Not that I have knowledge of, lass. I have tried from first to last to be both just and friendly in my dealings with the Indians, though of course now and then there are some not only disagreeable, but treacherous. With these, firm measures must be taken. Our safety demands that, if no more."

"Have you ever made a real enemy, father, I mean a bitter enemy of any one of these Indians who would have it in his power to injure you?"

"Nay, lass; I think not. So far as my knowledge extends these Indians have all been men of little standing among their own people. Yes, there is one I recall now," he added somewhat quickly, and a shade passing over his face which showed it was anything but a pleasant memory. "There is a half-breed, Jean Ignace. I once made him very angry. No doubt he will never forget it. Indeed, he has declared he will not."

"Would he have it in his power to really injure you, father? Could he now, for instance, influence old Walkulla to the extent that he would act as he did this morning?"

Mr. Blew shook his head, then said with conviction:

"It seems not so, Betty. Jean Ignace is a drunken rascal, for whom the Indians have little if any regard. Yea, I am positive he could not have such influence with one of old Walkulla's temperament.

"At one time," continued Mr. Blew, and looking away from Betty now, "I did have the idea, and sometimes entertain it even now, that Jean Ignace——"

"Well, father?" asked Betty anxiously, as he paused.

He turned his eyes now to meet hers.

"Remember, Betty," he said in slow, impressive voice, "that what I am about to tell you now is not to be repeated to another, except that other be your mother, who already knows of my suspicion."

"Oh, father, you know that you can trust me!" and Betty's look was one of such deep reproach that he stooped and kissed her, smiling upon her as he did so.

"I have sometimes thought," continued Mr. Blew in low tones, "that 'twas Jean Ignace who set the fire, as it happened very shortly after I had angered him."

"But your suspicion of him is not so strong now, father, as it once was, and all because you have been thinking very deeply of late on certain fragmentary bits of evidence, which if put together in a pattern, as

one piece a quilt, would say very plainly that it might have been some one else after all.”

“Betty,” exclaimed Mr. Blew, in sharp tones, “I have said naught of the kind, and you know it, lass. What, then, can you be thinking of to mention such matter?”

Instead of replying to this question, Betty asked one.

“How long, father, has this trouble been going on? I mean the one with reference to the falling off of the warehouse receipts?”

“About two months, lass, I should judge, though at first it was so gradual I scarcely noted it.”

“But it is very perceptible now?”

“Yes, Betty.”

Mr. Blew’s voice was tremulous as he spoke the name, but even more tremulous as he continued: “During the past month the decline has been such as to attract the attention of the Governor, and he has expressed dissatisfaction. Moreover, I think he is on the point of appointing a commission to look into the matter. At least, such has been the import of the rumors coming to our ears of late. How much of truth there is in these rumors, I have so far been unable to judge, but I shall know definitely to-day when

Gabriel returns. 'Tis strange he delays so. He should have been home three days ago."

"Oh, father, is it really so bad as this!" a sob caught in Betty's throat now, and the next moment hot tears began to roll down upon the hand she was holding in hers.

"Do not cry, dear child," he plead, as he stooped and raised her to a seat beside him. "'Tis really not as bad as it seems. Do you not see that the appointing of the commission would be the very thing for me, as it would discover and attach the blame where it belongs?"

"But, father, 'tis so dreadful for your good name to be attacked in this way. Oh, do you not see that some one is trying to ruin you; that he has succeeded so well in fact that even the Governor is aroused against you?"

"I do not know that he is really 'aroused' against me, my child," said Mr. Blew slowly. "Yea, I think that is too harsh a word. The Governor is simply seeking to have the matter set straight, I am sure."

"Yet he need not do it in this public way," declared Betty hotly. "He could have managed it after a more private fashion, I am sure."

Mr. Blew was about to reply, but at that moment

Edward entered the office. The young man's face had a troubled look, and he seemed to hesitate ere addressing his father. He had noted, too, Betty's wet eyes and Mr. Blew's air of dejection, and seemed to divine quickly the cause.

“What is it, Edward?” asked Mr. Blew, as he saw him hesitate.

“Choo-loc-cut-tah has come, father,” he said slowly.

“And did he bring the pelts and meat?” asked Mr. Blew, rising quickly. His face had brightened wonderfully, and he was all eagerness.

“Nay, father,” replied Edward sadly, “he but came to say that it will be impossible for him to keep his contract with you this winter.”

Mr. Blew sank again to his seat.

“Did he give any reason?” he asked in a faint voice.

“None whatever, sir. All my questioning failed to elicit anything of a satisfactory reply. His stubbornness was provoking, to say the least.”

“Things are getting worse, it seems,” said Mr. Blew. “I wonder what will happen next?” and he smiled feebly.

Betty sprang to her feet.

"Father," she said with resolute voice, "we must not wait for the Governor's commission. We must begin to work ourselves. We must find out who it is that's injuring you."

"Suppose we do, lass," her father asked slowly, "what then?"

"He must be punished as he deserves!" declared Betty, her eyes flashing.

"She is right, father," said Edward with steady voice, as he put his arm about Betty. "My sister has wisdom. She is but counseling what I have begged you many times of late to do,—find your enemy and punish him."

"But, if after he is found, he proves the kind that cannot be reached easily, what then, lad? Suppose his work has been of such a nature our fingers cannot be put on aught that is definite?"

"If that be the case then, father," advised Betty with resolute voice, "do not deal with him openly. Set a trap and catch him. Edward," turning suddenly to her brother, "I think I know that which will help us. I think I could almost put my finger on the person now. There has something happened within the past few days to make me confident."

"Be careful, lass," warned Mr. Blew. "Do not

“I shall have you tell me that later, when we have had time to discuss the matter more carefully.”

“’Tis a most serious business at best,” he continued, and turning now to Edward. “Though I think I know my enemy, and there may be no trouble at all in finding him, yet how am I to prove that his deeds have been of such a nature as to call for punishment? How am I, in short, to put a stop to his underhand proceedings against me?”

“Will not the Indians themselves help you, father?”

“Yes, the Indians will, I am sure!” cried Betty quickly. “That is, the best of the Indians. Go among them, father, both you and Edward. Make an appeal to them in person. Send Uncle Gabriel also and Master Roddey. I, too, will help,” she added with a look of sudden brightening intelligence; “for of course I *can* help, father. I can beg the Cacique, and he will do all he can to set matters right again.”

“But I would not like to draw the Cacique into this matter, Betty,” replied Mr. Blew, and smiling at her enthusiasm.

The smile was more than an attempt this time, for during the past few moments he had felt his own heart

growing more hopeful. Betty's assurance and courage were infectious.

"The Cacique will not mind," declared Betty. "He will be glad to help. 'Tis always a matter of pain to him, we know, when the Indians fail to keep faith with the white settlers of Dorchester. When he finds out how Walkulla and the others have been doing, he will persuade them back to their old allegiance. So if he discovers that one has been at work influencing the Indians against you, he will put it beyond the power of this enemy to further harm you."

"Betty speaks truly, father," declared Edward, "'tis the Cacique who can the most help us at present. We should see him so soon as we can, father, and lay the matter before him. I am ready to go to him at any time with your message, sir."

"Very well, Edward, we'll talk it over to-night, and decide upon the wisest and best course."

As Edward left the office, Mr. Blew turned again to his desk. To Betty's joy she could see that his brow had cleared considerably.

"'Twill all come right now, I am sure, father," she said in a glad voice, as she nestled her face for a moment against him. "So let us quit troubling, at least until we have tried and failed."

“But, my lass, there is another matter even of graver——”

The manner in which he stopped, and the sudden annoyed look that passed over his face showed very plainly that Mr. Blew had not intended to speak these words.

“Another matter, father, and one even graver?” repeated Betty, in sudden, distressed tones. “Oh, what can it be? Tell me quickly, father. Do not keep me waiting so, I beg.”

But still he did not answer her.

“I am waiting to hear, father. What is it that could be even graver than this which you have already told me?”

“Nay, I should not have mentioned it, for I have sufficiently distressed you already, lass. Forget that I said those words. I am provoked with myself that I did so.”

“Father, you must tell me,” plead Betty. “Whatever it is I could bear it far better than I could the suspense which your words give to me. Oh, can it be that 'tis this, after all, which has been the real source of your trouble, that has made you ever since my return seem not at all like yourself? Speak quickly, father. What is it that has been of such burden of woe to you

as to whiten your hair as it ought not yet to be whitened, and to give your face such lines of suffering as I have never seen it have before?"

She was leaning against him now, one arm across his shoulders, the other hand fondling his hair. Suddenly she took his head between both of her palms and turned it around so that he was compelled to look straight into her eyes.

"*Now, father, what is it?*" she asked with steady voice and eyes that never for an instant wavered away from his own. "Time and again I have asked this question of you, but never as I ask it now; for then I was dependent upon your will, but now I am determined to know. Do not look away from me so. I will take no subterfuge; nothing but the plain words that shall answer me clearly that which I have asked. *Now, father, what is it?*"

"Sit down then, lass," he said after a moment's silence. "I cannot bear that look in your eyes. It makes me feel all the more keenly how piercing your sorrow would be should that which I dread really come about."

"No sorrow, however keen could be really piercing," she answered loyally, "if I still had you, father, and——"

"Well, lass?"

"And your good name was unstained."

"Ah, lass, lass," he said brokenly, "'tis that very thing that brings the dread to me."

Seeing the sudden anguish which for the moment had rendered her speechless, he continued:

"Lass, you have often asked me if good Master Portman had not audited my accounts just before the fire, and given me the receipt safe enough, and always I have answered you yes, but no more than that."

She found voice fast enough now.

"Oh, father," she cried, with a sudden little gasping sound, as though she were about to choke, "there surely has naught of harm happened to the receipt?"

"He gave it to me on the following Sabbath, just before the church services," continued Mr. Blew, and turning his head away from Betty. "I remember that I took it from him and that I held it for a while in my hand. But from that day to this I have never laid eyes on it again, nor has any one else, for that matter, within my knowledge."

"You mean that you lost it?" Betty asked faintly.

“ ’Tis thus it seems, lass, though how I could have been so careless, knowing the great importance of the paper, I cannot see. But my mind at that moment was concentrated upon another matter which I was busily discussing with Master Portman, even up to the time we reached the church door.”

“ And did you still have the paper in your hand, father? ”

Betty’s voice was growing stronger now, though the thought of just how great a calamity the loss of the receipt and the subsequent death of Master Portman might mean, was beating like a turbulent wave at her heart.

“ Sometimes it seems so to me, Betty, and then again it does not. I remember clearly taking the paper from Master Portman, and of having it in my hand while I stood there talking to him, as I have told you. But whether I still had it in my hand after he dismounted and began walking with me toward the church is not altogether clear to me. Yet what could I have done with it? Had I put it in my pocket, I assuredly should have found it there afterwards; and had I carried it into the church, I should certainly have placed it upon the seat of the pew beside me, to have discovered it when the services had closed.”

“That has been nearly two months now, father?”

“Yes, lass.”

“And not a single trace of it have you yet found?”

“Nay, my Betty, though I’ve searched again and again every inch of space without and within the church.”

“Have you asked others about it, too, father?”

“Not many, Betty. You see, lass,” he added quickly, “’tis a sore wound to my pride to let others know I could have been so careless. ’Twould be a great reflection upon me in the position I hold. I have told the trouble to a few trusty ones. Your mother knows it, too; I could not keep it from her.”

“But you enjoined her to keep it from us, father. You did not want your children to know, because you did not want to bring a single cloud of sorrow across their bright sky. Oh, father, why have you kept it so persistently from me, when I might have been of such help to you!”

“You poor little chipmunk! What could *you* do?”

“There’s no telling, father,” with brave assurance. “I could at least have been helping you in the search. One thing is very clear; ’tis somewhere about the church, unless——”

“ Well, Betty? ”

“ Unless some one deliberately took it from you with a purpose in view; or found it, not knowing it was a paper of any importance. One of the Indians or negroes might have done the latter, father.”

“ But who could have deliberately taken it from me, Betty, without my knowing it? Remember, I had the paper clasped in my hand.”

“ But paid so little heed to it, father, that, according to your own statement, you do not now recall whether or not you had it when you reached the door of the church.”

“ There is yet another question, my Betty. Who could have desired to take the paper from me, and for a purpose? ”

“ Can you not answer that question yourself, father? ” asked Betty steadily.

“ Nay, lass, I cannot,” he replied with sudden vehemence, “ and we must not let such matter slip even into our thoughts, much less name it. The receipt is lost, and all through my carelessness, as is very evident.”

“ And there has as yet been no record made at Charles Town of that quarter’s business, and various surmises have been made, and many things said in

consequence, that have been as the torment of a lash to you, is it not so, father?”

“True, lass, true; the torture of these days has been well-nigh unendurable. I have again and again asked for further time to make the report, hoping to find the itemized receipt. Without it, and with all my books and papers gone that would have substantiated my word, I am powerless to make such report as would have the stamp of validity upon it.”

“Oh, father, surely there are those who would take your word?”

“True, lass, there are some. I should be a miserable wretch indeed if this were not so. But with an enemy working against me, as is now the case, and with certain seeds of suspicion that have been cast abroad, likely to spring into growth at any time, can you not see how necessary it is that there be more than my word to substantiate my accounts?”

“As I have before stated,” continued Mr. Blew, “I have put off the matter of the quarter’s entry from time to time till now it seems very clear that I cannot do so longer with safety. I have feared, for the reason I have given you, to come right out and tell just how the receipt was lost. It shows a piece of carelessness such as no man who sets any value whatever upon his

business standing cares to face. So far, I have contented myself by merely stating that the receipt had been misplaced. I think the impression has been that I had it somewhere among my papers, but in the confusion of moving back into the new office, it got misplaced. Better it would be for me," he concluded bitterly, "if it had been burned."

"It really does not seem so bad, father," said Betty, after a pause, "that is, if you can, with Edward's help, remember the transactions sufficiently well to make a satisfactory report."

"One satisfactory to myself I could assuredly make, lass, but whether it would so prove to the Government is a matter that gives me much torment. At one time I am sure that such report would have passed unquestioned; but now that even the ears of the Governor have been assailed by that which arouses his suspicion of me, for what can I hope?"

"Oh, father, you do not certainly know that the ears of the Governor have been assailed by that which has aroused suspicion of you. Wait until Uncle Gabriel returns ere you speak with such surety as that. On the other hand, it may be that he will bring you cheering news."

"Heaven grant it, lass," Mr. Blew said fervently.

“But as cheering as it may be,” he continued, “let us not lose sight of the fact that there is but one thing that can fully clear away the dark cloud, and that is the finding of the receipt.”

“Then we must find the receipt, father,” said Betty firmly.

CHAPTER X

THE ELDER'S TEXT

CAPTAIN GABRIEL did bring news that had somewhat of cheer. There had been no indication, so far as the Governor was concerned, of an intention to appoint a commission to look into Mr. Blew's affairs, though Captain Gabriel had to admit that there had been talk of such a step among certain ones in the town.

" 'Tis no more," he declared, " than the mean out-spakings of two or three envious ones who would like themselves to step into your place of profit, Philip, though they would never, by any shift, have the tact or the industry to hold it."

Mr. Blew appeared somewhat comforted by the result of his brother-in-law's careful inquiries. So long as the Governor was not really taking steps to humiliate him, he could bear his trouble with more grace. Yet this visit of Captain Gabriel to the city, and the nature of that which he had learned there, but strengthened him all the more in the conviction that had of late begun to form itself within his mind. He must not very

much longer delay making report to the Government of the quarter's business at the warehouse, which had drawn to a close just prior to the fire. Happily, he had some time ago accounted for all commodities furnished by the Government for trading with the Indians. Evil tongues could not say he had held anything back in that direction.

Yet, despite this conviction with reference to a straightening of his affairs, Mr. Blew still delayed from day to day, and always it was with the hope that the paper of such infinite value to him would be found.

He had gone again, with Betty's help this time, over every foot of ground around the church. They had even peered within the hollow of certain trees, thinking the wind might perhaps have blown it there, as had once been the case with a folded bit of parchment the minister held. The interior of the church, too, had been minutely searched.

"'Tis no use, it seems, my Betty," said Mr. Blew in despair. "It has vanished as completely as though the winds had indeed borne it far away. I must get along without it, it seems. Well, I can make a pretty fair statement, leaving the receipt out of the question, but who is there beside myself to say that it is true?"

Oh, if Christopher Portman had not died in that sudden way!" and Mr. Blew groaned in bitterness of spirit as he pressed his hand to his eyes.

"Master Portman's death was indced a great blow to you, father, aside from the deep affection you had for him."

"Truly, it was, my Betty. With him alive, I should not need the paper; but with both gone! Oh, lass, it seems I shall never know what it is to be happy again until that paper is found."

"Do not speak thus, father," plead Betty, "for the paper may never be found. Think, then, what it would mean to us to see you so miserable. Oh, father, you must cheer up. Do not get into such a state of despondency again, I beg. I cannot, cannot bear it. Promise me, father, you will not."

Betty was close to tears; seeing which her father grasped her hand quickly, and forcing a smile to his lips, said:

"Come, lass, you need yourself to cheer up. If 'tis the promise you entreat that will help you do it, then take it, my Betty, for I give it to you, and I will do all in my power to see that it is not broken."

"Thank you, father; and for my part I promise never to give up the search for the lost paper un-

til it is found; if found it can be through mortal effort."

His eyes shone as he kissed her.

"Bless you, my lass, for the promise. Somehow, I have the feeling at this moment that if ever the paper is found, it will be found through you."

The Dorchester Church, or the Old White Meeting House, as it has since been known, stood about midway between the fort and a ferry on the Ashley that gave crossing to travelers along the public highway, or Great Path, as the Indians called it, leading to Charles Town.* Thus the church building stood a full mile and a half from the heart of the settlement. Why it was put at this distance has never been clearly decided, unless it was to make the place of service more accessible to those without the township. Along the river and on the highway, leading both toward Charles Town and Wiltown, or New London, on the South Edisto, several families had settled. Some of them had come, as had the Dorchester colonists, from the old home in Massachusetts. Hence they, too, when the church was built, desired to worship with those of their

* This highway afterwards became a famous stage route between the South Carolina seaport (Charleston) and Augusta, Georgia.

own faith. In times of danger these families upon the outlying plantations fled either to the protection of the fort at Dorchester or to Charles Town. The church edifice, erected in 1700, built of brick, with a heavy framing of cedar and cypress timbers, remained in a fine state of preservation up to the time of the Revolutionary War, its pulpit having been occupied by several famous preachers, among them the great Whitefield. It was destroyed by the British in 1780, but rebuilt upon a larger scale in 1794. It was called the White Meeting House because of the heavy coat of cement by which the walls within and without were covered, and these walls were always kept spotlessly white. Three times each year the old Meeting House was given its glistening dress of purity.

With that promise to her father, a resolution had taken firm hold of Betty. It had been the beginning of September when the paper was lost, and it was now midway in the second week in November. Quantities of dead leaves having fallen, the winds had whirled them about until, in addition to the thick carpet spread all around, there were drifts of them piled here and there, some even against the church building. Betty's resolve was to gather certain of her young friends and to come for a thorough cleaning of the churchyard.

Many of the graves, too, looked neglected, with the leaves drifted upon them, and the straggling rows of box showing sad lack of an encouragement to grow.

Regularly twice a year the graveyard and the church premises were given a scrupulous cleaning by the men of the village. But this fall they had neglected it. This was due to the fact that they had been very closely engaged with matters tending to the stronger defense of the town and the better navigation of the river.

Betty's motive in rallying picked ones of her young friends for the thorough cleaning of the church grounds was twofold. First and foremost, she cherished the hope that somewhere within those beds of drifted leaves she would come upon the lost paper. Next in intensity to this was the wish to surprise agreeably the good people of the village by presenting them on the following Sabbath with church premises so beautifully clean it would rejoice eyes and hearts to see it.

Although more than two months had gone since the disappearance of the paper, there had been little rain, as Betty knew; only two moderate showers, she had been told. If the folded sheet of parchment had found

safe lodgment beneath a thick covering of leaves, then she was sure of finding it in good condition. But would she find it? Was there really any promise of success in making such thorough search of the church grounds? Somehow, the hope she had previously cherished had lost greatly in brightness since a conversation Betty had had with her mother on the day following that of the visit of her father and herself to the church.

“Beautiful, do you know who was standing with or near to father that day at the Meeting House when Master Portman handed him the receipt?”

“I think no one was standing just with him, Betty, but there was a little group of the men not far away. I noted this, because your father had been walking beside me toward the church, when Master Portman rode up and called to him. I saw him give your father the paper, and I waited a few minutes, thinking Philip would rejoin me. As he did not do this, but seemed to get very earnestly in conversation with Master Portman, I turned again and went into the building.”

“Who were the men standing near to father, Beautiful, when Master Portman gave him the paper?”

“There were Master Roddey, Captain John God-

frey, who was on a week's visit to the village, Master Hall, and—and Master Jonas Pettibone. There may have been others, but I remember only these four. As your father talked with Master Portman, I saw Master Jonas Pettibone turn suddenly and walk toward them. I supposed that Master Portman had called to him; but really I do not know to this day if it were Master Portman toward whom he was making his way or Master Silas Holmes, who had just then ridden up beyond Master Portman. I saw no more, because your Aunt Joan reached my side at that moment, and we went on into the church."

Aunt Joan, however, had seen a little more, and it was she who supplied what Betty, had she been a detective, would have called "an added link." At the church door Aunt Joan had lingered a moment, and looked back, waiting to speak to old Madam Taft, who had journeyed four miles by chair to attend the services. It was then that Aunt Joan saw Masters Portman and Pettibone and her brother-in-law walking together up the path to the church. They seemed in deep conversation, and it was a somewhat excited gesture made by Mr. Blew that had especially attracted Aunt Joan's attention.

A despondent feeling took possession of Betty. Was

it really of any use after all to go to such trouble to clean up the church grounds? But she had promised her father she would never give up the search until she had done all within the power of mortal to do. That promise, loyal Betty resolved, despite all discouragements, to carry out to the letter. Besides, there was the honest desire to give the church premises the cleaning up they so much needed.

One thing that had added greatly to Betty's despondency was the hesitation of her mother when the name of Master Pettibone had been mentioned as one of those in the group near to Mr. Blew. Was it because her mother had found the name somewhat difficult to pronounce, or for another reason? There had been a strange light, too, in Mrs. Blew's eyes, as she had given the additional information with reference to Master Pettibone's movement in the direction of Master Portman and Mr. Blew. A question clung persistently to Betty's tongue, but she dared not ask it for fear of those that would follow. Her father had forbidden her to "name names" merely upon suspicion. Another reason also restrained Betty. Her father, she was sure, did not want her mother to know of the blows that were being struck him in the dark. She was unhappy enough already with what she did know.

Betty put on her most cheerful appearance as she summoned to her help those who would prove companionable spirits as well as forceful aids in the work she had planned. They responded with alacrity. They were not only delighted with the thought of the day in the woods—for they were to carry their dinner and have a social time in between working hours—but they were also ready for the expenditure of effort necessary to the task before them. Like Betty, they were of the opinion that the churchyard ought to have been cleaned long ago, and, like her, too, they enjoyed in advance the pleasure of the good villagers in seeing the sacred spot present such a pleasing appearance.

Betty had carefully kept from her cousin, Anne, all knowledge of her father's trouble. Anne had noted Mr. Blew's careworn appearance, but attributed it, as others did, to business perplexities. Neither did Charles know aught of the cloud that was lowering about them. Only Betty had discovered it, and that through the keen perceptions of love.

They started off in gay procession down the white stretch of sandy pathway winding upward to the yellow-soiled hill, where in winter time was really the only disagreeable portion of the trail to the church. But now the soil was firm and hard, save for the pow-

dery covering of dust into which their feet sank an inch or more.

"This is certainly a bad place after hard rains," said Charles.

"Then the mud makes it so slippery 'tisin't altogether safe to attempt the ascent, especially on horseback. It was a wise thing to cut that other path further away toward the woods."

"Well, there is no danger of slipping now," said Henry, with a laugh. "Phew! these clouds of dust are certainly disagreeable. Let's get farther out on the border of grass. That will help some."

"The grass, too, is covered with dust," said Emily, "and how forlorn it looks!"

"I don't know when I have ever seen it so dry at this season of the year as it is now," said Ralph Portman, as he stooped to flick the coating of dust from his shoes by means of a wisp of pine bough.

"That is so," replied Charles. "Just look at that caterpillar's trail. How plainly it shows! I fear we are going to find it a terribly dusty task cleaning up the grounds," and he made a grimace.

"Oh, Master Indolence," retorted Betty, "if 'twill do you any good, I'll tell you we are going to do some sprinkling first."

“Wise Bess! I might have known that you had thought to make provision of some kind 'gainst our being smothered in dust.”

“Ha! Master Charles!” cried Henry suddenly, “I want to know where is now the prospect of that snow-fall which you are reported to have declared would come with such intensity as to make a polar bear dance for joy? It seems to me this has been the warmest and driest fall we've had since we came.”

“Oh, the snow will appear later, never you fear,” replied Charles, with serenity.

“Snow?” echoed Ralph. “Charles, have you really been such a ninny as to predict anything like that here? Oh, now I see why you did it. 'Twas to make Mistress Anne feel more at home.”

“I can do that without the snow, Master Ralph,” replied Anne, with a smile. “I am glad enough to find these balmy skies and a climate that in November is as mild as our May.”

The young people all looked at Anne appreciatively. Pleasing, indeed, it was to hear her thus praise their home. It was known that she had been sent South principally for the benefit the milder temperature might have upon a not very strong pair of lungs. Already she looked considerably improved.

"Well, you are surely displaying your appreciation of the mild climate, Anne," said Charles, "by the persistency with which you stay out in it. That's good, but if you don't mind, you'll get as freckled as a fox-glove by the time you are ready to go home. Then your folks in Boston Town won't own you."

"Mercy me!" cried Anne, in pretended consternation, "I hope I shan't turn purple and white. 'Twould truly be annoying."

Henry gave a shout of laughter as he noted the confusion of Charles, while Ralph said dryly:

"Better be a little more particular about your comparisons next time, Charles."

"Yonder is the Elder!" cried Betty suddenly. "Now, you children, mind how he catches you laughing and joking. He will think it most unbecoming levity."

Sure enough, there was Elder William Pratt coming straight down the path in front of them, jogging along on his stout gray pony. The Elder was a well-known person in the colony. He had come out with the first settlers, and, having been a man of some note in the old home in Massachusetts, easily took rank as one of the most influential in the new home. His piety was deep, and his learning considerable for that day. In addition

to his yearning for the souls of his fellow-men, the Elder found keen pleasure in prescribing for their bodily ills. He had never taken a regular course in medicine, but he knew the curative properties of many roots and herbs, and he ventured on others.

He was returning now from a visit to a sick man on Blake plantation, to whom he had carried both spiritual and bodily healing. The broad brim of the Elder's hat was pulled down over his eyes, and he was intently reading. Thus he did not see them till the gray pony was right in their midst and had stopped; for, wise pony that he was, he knew that the Elder would want to speak to the young people.

The stopping of the pony attracted the attention of the Elder. He pushed back his hat brim, and raised his eyes from the book. Immediately every young head was bent in reverent obeisance. The girls did more; each dropped him a deep courtesy.

"Well, my children, whither do you go this morning, and with such cheerful countenances?"

It was Betty who answered him, for every one else seemed to have lost voice at that moment.

"We are going, sir, to clean off the Meeting House grounds. They have long been in need of it, as doubtless you know, sir."

“Truly, truly, lass. ’Tis a sore shame, such monstrous neglect, and I have often spoken of it, but to no avail. Now it seems the young will take in hand what their elders ought to have done.”

“I think, sir,” spoke Betty again, and with more courage now, “it has not really been from neglect that the churchyard has been left in such condition, but from the want of opportunity. ’Tis mightily busy with many things of grave importance the men of the village have been of late, as you will recall, sir.”

“True enough, Mistress Betty, true enough.”

The Elder paused, then, as he looked with careful scrutiny into each young face, during which more than one knee shook a little, he added:

“Now that you young people have undertaken to perform the duty, see to it that it is done in becoming spirit. Remember, ’tis the home of the dead you have invaded, and act accordingly. There should be no high-raised words, and certainly naught of laughter or other levity. Do you understand?”

The Elder had begun to address his remarks in general, but as he concluded he looked straight at Charles and Henry.

“You may depend upon us, sir, not to forget where we are,” said Charles respectfully.

Henry said naught, but he, too, felt the effect of the Elder's gaze, for not even the semblance of a smile appeared.

"I trust 'tis honestly you have spoken, lad, but often are the young tempted to unseemly behavior because of the absence of the restraint afforded through the presence of elders. Bear in mind, however," and now the Elder glanced around him severely, "that there is nothing done which shall not come to light; naught hidden that shall not at some day be revealed.

"I have just been reading these words in this best of Books," continued Elder Pratt, his eyes returning again to the volume still held against the pommel of the saddle. "Hear me, children, for 'tis expedient they should be read to you:

"For there is nothing hid which shall not be manifested; neither was there anything kept secret, but that it should come abroad.'"

The Elder's voice was sharp and high-pitched. His words penetrated to some distance around them. Each young heart felt itself beating faster and faster. A shiver seized Betty. The sentence kept repeating itself over and over for some moments after the Elder's voice had ceased. *"For there is nothing hid which shall not be manifested."* Was this always true? Did the words

of the Good Book proclaim an infallible law of retribution?

“There’s the text for you, my children. Now hold fast to it. Let it abide with you through life, and cause every act to be such that it need not be hidden from the eyes of man. It cannot be hidden from the eyes of God, remember.”

He was riding on again when a slight, hacking sound from Anne attracted him.

“That won’t do, lass,” he said. “You must get rid of that cough; and there’s nothing will accomplish it like a tea of mullein stalk, thickened with a little flax, and with just enough of honey to make it go down well.”

“Now he will be coming around to doctor you,” said Charles, so soon as he was sure Elder Pratt was out of hearing, “and to my way of thinking you’ll wish then, sweet lass, you had never been born; for oh, he can give things bitter enough to tie tongue and throat together!”

CHAPTER XI

A THRILLING RACE

THE Elder's text haunted Betty. Over and over again the words rang through her mind: "*For there is nothing hid which shall not be manifested.*"

How strange that Elder Pratt should have read that text to them just at this time! Of course, he had meant it as a guide to the young people concerning their conduct through life, as well as a warning with reference to any present unseemly behavior while within the sacred precincts of the dead. But to Betty it had a deeper meaning; a suggestiveness, in fact, that was almost startling. Would the lost paper really be found? Would the dark cloud which had settled about her father be lifted away, leaving the sun to shine brightly again? So great was this hope, that it made Betty's heart very light as she set about the task of directing the cleaning of the graveyard.

Betty had told each young helper that there was a lost paper she desired to find, one dropped by her father some weeks before; but to no one of them, not even to Charles, did she breathe a word of its great

importance. They knew it was of value, and that was all. They were to look carefully for it under every bed of leaves and everywhere that it might have found lodgment.

The young people had no more than reached the churchyard when Chi-co-la appeared, and with him Daniel. The faithful Indian had followed them at Mrs. Blew's request. Though it was a time of peace, there was never any telling what danger might be lurking near. Chi-co-la had promised Mrs. Blew that he would reconnoiter carefully all the surrounding forest ere permitting the young people to remain at their task.

Every voice hailed Chi-co-la with delight, for he was a great favorite. There was scant welcome, however, for Daniel, but he seemed not at all disposed to resent this. At the last moment, Daniel, scenting a fine time, had plead with his mother to allow him to accompany Chi-co-la, and she, not having the heart to refuse him, had at last consented.

“‘By the pricking of my thumbs,’” cried Charles, “’tis borne to me that mischief is to overtake us this day! Chi-co-la, why did you bring that young rogue? Didn't it come to you what an amount of trouble he'd be more than likely to give us?”

"The White Mother* said come, so Chi-co-la bring," replied the Indian, and looking at Charles in a way which said plainly that that settled it without further discussion.

"Perhaps he will not give us so much trouble as you think, Charles," said Betty mildly, as she bestowed a loving pat upon Daniel's tousled head. "You'll try to behave as we want you to, won't you, dearie? You'll do as sister tells you, won't you, Daniel?"

"Yes, sister," he replied quickly, but he was not looking at Betty. His glance was upon Charles, though in a somewhat sidewise fashion; and there was a little speculative gleam which would have aroused Charles's suspicion had he caught it fully. Charles did note, however, that one of Daniel's hands was fumbling in the small pouch of squirrel skin, which Chi-co-la had made for him, and which he wore at his side after the fashion of older woodsmen.

"What have you in there?" asked Charles somewhat sharply.

Daniel's lip began to quiver.

"You should not talk to me so," he said. "I have nothing of yours."

"Don't be rough with him, Charles," urged Betty.

* Chi-co-la's name for Mrs. Blew.

"'Tis no doubt some of his own little treasures. Let him enjoy them, and let him share the pleasure with us to-day. I'll be responsible for him," she added quickly. "Now, Daniel, you must stay near sister, and don't make her sorry she spoke those words for you."

"Nay, sister, I will not, truly," and he put his hand up, drew her head down, and kissed her.

He was a loving little brother, though he did try them very sorely at times by his pranks. He was fairly brimming over with mischief, and it now and then overflowed to a somewhat disastrous extent. Thus Charles, who was well aware of this, did not look with favor upon Daniel's appearance among them. He'd be the source of constant mischief, Charles was sure.

To the left of the church, a hundred feet or so away, a small creek flowed. It was here that Betty had hoped to find the water for laying the dust. But when they came to the stream, to their dismay they found it almost dry. More than ever then they realized how complete had been the drought.

Small pools, however, still remained here and there throughout the course of the stream, and by dint of much patience and perseverance, and by pursuing a

plan Chi-co-la suggested, they secured enough water to make their task of sweeping up the dried leaves more agreeable.

For drinking water they had that in the deep cistern constructed at one end of the "noon-house," as it was called. This was a long, low building of cypress logs, which stood some little distance in the rear of the church and just without the graveyard. At one end was the cistern, at the other a deep chimney, and near by a long shed containing horse stalls.

It was here that during all-day meetings the noon lunches were prepared and eaten. How much nicer the ginger-bread and doughnuts tasted, especially in cold weather, when they were heated in front of the great fire of logs! It was nice, too, to warm one's self, after the morning in the cold, damp church that had no way of being heated.

Often, too, the noon-house was the catechizing place of the children. Here, while the luncheon was being prepared, one of the elders gathered the young people around him to see how much of the morning's sermon had been imbibed. Woe to the luckless one who could remember naught! These noon-house catechism classes were no doubt the first inspirations toward the modern Sunday-school.

Our young people worked with a will. Even Daniel showed unusual industry, proving of real help, getting in no one's way, and, most surprising of all, playing no pranks.

"If we work an hour longer," said Charles, "we'll be through. Then we'll eat our lunch with more relish because of the consciousness that our task is done. Is it agreed?"

"Yes," came the hearty assent.

"We'll have a good part of the afternoon before us, too," continued Charles. "What do you say, then, to looking for some haws and grapes?"

"The very thing!" cried Henry. "I know a fine place, if the birds haven't already made off with the store."

"If they have," declared Ralph, "then I know of another, where I am sure the supply is so abundant that they couldn't make off with it if they took all winter."

"How far is it?" asked Anne a little nervously. "Shall we have to go very deep into the woods?"

"Oh, it's no more than a mile, or a mile and a half. 'Tis over 'bout the river; not far from the ferry. Now, if it's the Indians you are thinking of again, Mistress Anne," continued Ralph somewhat mischievously, "I beg you to cease being disturbed. There are

no Indians near enough to get our scalps without a race for them."

"Oh, don't talk about such things," interrupted Emily, "even in a playful way. It gives me the shivers."

"Well, this is a good sort of day for the shivers," said Henry. "Wish I had 'em. My! isn't it warm!" and he fanned his flushed face with a palmetto frond. "But really, Mistress Anne," he continued, as he bowed to her, "you need not concern yourself about hostile Indians so long as we have Chi-co-la. I think he could scent one ten miles."

"Don't exaggerate so," said Betty, with a smile. "But truly-true, Nance, we have a great protection in our dear, good Indian. If danger were near, I am sure he would discover it. If he says so, I am certain we can safely go in search of the haws and grapes. 'Twill be a treat to you, I know."

By an hour past noon, as Charles had predicted, their task was completed. The grounds were beautifully clean, not only raked bare of leaves, but they were cleanly swept. The graves, too, had been put in better shape, and the straggling rows of box trimmed and well watered.

Though it was a goodly sight to her eyes, yet Betty's

heart was sad, disappointed. After all the care and patience, for she felt that each young helper had made careful search, there was not a sign of the paper. She knew now how much she had depended on the literal fulfillment of the Elder's text. Yet, after a moment, hope returned again to her heart. Though the paper were never found still might her father's name be cleared in some other way. She would not be dismayed, but would continue to work persistently toward this end. Her father's enemy might yet be caught in a trap of his own setting.

The young people repaired to the noon-house to enjoy their lunch, refreshing themselves with many cool draughts from the deep cistern.

Chi-co-la had returned from his scouting trip, declaring the forest free from danger of lurking foe. They could safely go on their expedition in search of haws and grapes.

"I do wish we could burn those unsightly heaps of leaves," said Charles, as they were starting off.

"Yes," replied Henry, "tis too bad to leave them thus."

"Can't we burn them, anyhow?" piped Daniel.
"Twould be a fine sight to see the fire leap!"

"Nay," spoke Betty quickly; "we must not think of such a thing. 'Tis altogether too dry. The forest might be set on fire, and there's no telling the damage that would be done."

"But could we not rake carefully around the piles of leaves," said Ralph, "so that there would be only the bare ground for a considerable space. Then the fire might not spread."

"Yes, sister," entreated Daniel; "do let's set the leaves on fire. Let me start it, sister," and Daniel at that moment seemed very busy with something at the bottom of his squirrel-skin pouch.

But no one noticed the movement; though more than one voice exclaimed against the request.

"It's not to be thought of," said Charles somewhat sternly to Daniel. "It may rain in a day or two," he added to the others; "then we can return and make a bonfire of the leaves."

The leaves had been raked some little distance beyond the church, thus leaving the building about midway of the cleanly swept space. There were a dozen or more of the high mounds of leaves, and they did look somewhat unsightly.

"It's too bad to leave them so," commented Betty, as she paused for a moment to look back upon the

ungainly heaps. "I am truly glad, though, that we got them thus far from the church."

"Oh, don't trouble any more about the leaves, Mistress Betty," said Henry. "No doubt we'll be able to get rid of them in a day or so."

They started off merrily now in search of the fruit; Henry and Ralph good-naturedly contending for the honor of leading the expedition. Each had his own alluring picture to offer of the spot in view.

They had gone a full quarter of a mile, when suddenly Betty asked, a little excitement in manner and tone:

"Where is Daniel? Has any one had a view of him recently?"

"I think he has run on ahead," said Emily.

"Sister, you'll have a hard task," remarked Charles, "if you keep up with that young rogue."

"Well, I promised to be responsible for him to-day at least; so I must be as good as my word. Charles, call to Chi-co-la and see if Daniel has run on in front of him."

Chi-co-la had not seen Daniel for some moments, and he was sure the child had not passed him.

Just as consternation had seized Betty, and all were on the point of retracing their steps to look for Daniel,

he came running toward them from the direction of the church. His cap was off, his face flushed, and he was almost breathless from hard running.

"What do you mean?" asked Charles sharply, "staying behind in this way and frightening your sister so? What have you been doing, anyhow?" and now Charles tried to detain him and to look at him closely.

But Daniel pulled away from him and went to Betty.

"'Twas a rabbit," he said; but still he did not look at Betty either. "Old cotton-tail had a home under a stump."

"Daniel, surely you did not give us this fright just for a rabbit?" said Betty reproachfully.

Daniel still hung his head.

"He's keeping something back," declared Charles. "Now what else have you been up to?" he added sharply, as he grasped his young brother by the shoulder and tried to make Daniel look at him.

But Daniel was sulky. He would neither look at Charles, nor would he answer another question.

"I'll tell *you* sometime, sister," was all he would deign to say, as he permitted Betty to grasp his hand, and for some little time thereafter to keep him close beside her.

It had been decided to try first Henry's "place of plenty." It was further away from the river and more remote from any of the public paths. For this reason there was the greater promise of rich stores of the wild fruit they sought.

They had gone about a half mile further, lingering now and then beside the way, when suddenly Henry exclaimed:

"Why, how cloudy it is getting. Can it be going to rain, think you?"

Ralph glanced upward quickly.

"Why, sure enough, the sun is clouding over. Now who would have thought the rain would have come so soon?"

At that moment Anne coughed.

"There is something very oppressive about the atmosphere," she said. "What do you suppose is the matter?"

A quick exclamation came from Charles.

"It is not clouds that are closing about the sun, I think, but smoke."

"Smoke?" echoed Betty. "Whence could it come, and so quickly?"

"It *is* smoke!" cried Ralph.

Anne was coughing again.

"I fear the woods are on fire somewhere," said Charles. "That would be dreadful and it so dry."

They had paused and were facing each other in quite an excited little group, when Chi-co-la approached.

"Fire!" he said. "Woods on fire! Burning big!"

There was no doubt of it now, for a cloud of smoke had settled about them, and others besides Anne were coughing.

"Where is the fire, Chi-co-la, think you?" asked Charles.

"There!" he replied, pointing in the direction whence they had come.

"Toward the church!" ejaculated Charles. "Can it be now? Daniel!" he called sharply to his young brother, "do you know anything about the fire?"

"Don't be so rough, Charles," plead Betty. "What could Daniel know about it, any more than we do?"

"Let him answer then," replied Charles, his eyes still on Daniel.

"Yes, I set it," said Daniel boldly. "I had father's tinder-box. 'Twas only one pile of leaves though. I thought it couldn't do much harm, and sister had said it was too bad to leave them so; they were such an ugly sight!"

"Mercy me!" cried Betty, and she, too, was provoked with him now; "what *have* you done, Daniel? There's no telling the mischief the fire may bring!"

Daniel began to whimper.

"So this was why you went back, was it?" cried Charles, making no effort to hide his anger. "We might have known you were after mischief. And to think you had the impudence to bring father's tinder-box! Well, you shall be punished for it; you may rest assured of that much. You have no more thought than a baby; and here you are nearly eleven years old!"

"Let us go back," said Betty, "and see if we can't do something toward putting the fire out. It will be dreadful if the whole strip of forest catches."

"Go back?" echoed Henry. "Why, look there, Mistress Elizabeth. Methinks we'll have to run forward, if we don't want to be caught."

He spoke truly. Glancing in the direction indicated, they saw thick walls of smoke sweeping toward them. They could see, too, sparks flying upward from the curling columns, and there, too, was the blazing top of a pine.

"Yes, run! run!" said Chi-co-la.

"Straight ahead!" shouted Charles, as he caught

Emily by the arm, "and see to it, lads, that each of the maids has assistance."

"No! no!" cried Chi-co-la, "not straight ahead. Turn so, toward the river! Yes, the river! the river!"

He had picked up Daniel at Betty's entreaty, and was already on a swift run for the river, though not directly toward it, for the fire was sweeping to right and left, and the quick wit of the Indian told him that he must reach the stream by veering away from the fire as much as possible. He knew where the river made a decided bend toward the right, and this was the point he hoped to gain.

"Run! run!" he shouted again to the others. "Follow Chi-co-la!"

Even as they started they could hear the crackling of the flames, and further away came the crash of a falling pine as the fiery tongues licked their way through the trunk. They could see that the fire was spreading. The wind, too, was blowing in their direction, thus placing them at a great disadvantage.

Soon sparks began to fall about them, and numerous little wild animals came scurrying by crazed from fright. Once a huge snake hissed across the path in front of Anne, almost causing her to collapse from ter-

ror. But Ralph Portman, who was aiding her in the flight, bravely held her to her feet.

Poor Anne had a hard time keeping up. The race was a terrible ordeal. Her breath came in gasps, her heart beat so it almost suffocated her. But for Ralph she surely must have given up. He almost dragged her onward, speaking cheery words, and encouraging her in every way he could devise.

On sped the young runners, and nearer and nearer came their fiery foe. The heat was growing intense. The whole forest behind them seemed suddenly to have become a fiery furnace. The sparks began to ignite their clothing, so that even as they sped on in the race for life they had continually to use their hands to put out the fire.

"Chi-co-la was right," said Charles; "the river is our only hope. It is nearer than the clearing of which I thought. But will we reach the river in time?"

This was the question uppermost in the mind of every participant in that race for life, and there was one dread moment when it seemed it must be answered in the negative and that death would surely win. As they came in sight of the river the fire seemed at their very heels. The sparks covered them. Faces and hands were scorching; their clothing smoking in more



ON SPED THE YOUNG RUNNERS, AND NEARER AND NEARER CAME
THEIR FIERY FOE. — *Page 186.*

than one place, while the smoke so filled eyes and throat that they could scarcely see where to run, or command the breath with which to make the one supreme dash for life.

They came at length to the river's bank, with scarcely five paces between them and their fiery foe

"Jump!" cried Chi-co-la.

"Jump! Jump!" shouted Charles.

"Jump! Oh, *do* jump!" cried Betty, as she saw Anne Sumner hesitate.

"Oh, I fear I shall be drowned!" cried Anne to Ralph, as she held back.

"I'll not let you do that, Mistress Anne," he replied, and dragged her into the stream not a moment too soon.

CHAPTER XII

WALKULLA'S PIPE OF FRIENDSHIP

THERE was a good depth of water in the river despite the drought. When Chi-co-la and Charles had shouted to each in turn to "jump! jump!" they had known that it was into deep water; but forethought had been taken for those who could not swim. As the plunge was made, each lad held firmly to the arm of the lass he had been assisting. Betty could swim a little, but she was glad enough to have Henry's help. The water looked so dark and deep, and the river was quite wide at this point.

Anne and Emily came up sputtering and gasping from the sudden plunge into the current, and for a moment or so Charles and Ralph had all they could do to keep the heads of the four of them above water.

"I'll drown! Oh, I know I shall!" cried Anne in terror. "This is awful!"

"You will if you don't keep still," shouted Charles. "Don't grasp Ralph in that way, pray, dear Anne. 'Twill be the death of both of you, if you don't mind.

Leave his arms free; pray, dear cousin, do hear me!"

Their intention had been to swim across to the other bank of the river; but now, as they looked, they saw, to their dismay, that a shower of sparks had been thrown across, and tongues of flame were already running along the dried grass on that side. They were now between two walls, as it were, of fire. Luckily, however, there was not any very dense growth of vegetation on either bank at this point, though along the bank whence they had just sprang the flames were leaping and crackling in a manner to show them plainly what would have been their fate had they not plunged into the river. Now and then showers of cinders fell upon them from burning vines, and the heat even in the river was considerable. It was truly a relief to have the water so near in which to lave scorched faces and hands.

"There is nothing else but to tread water," said Charles, "helping the girls as best we can until we come to a spot where we *can* land. Fortunately we'll be moving with the current, and that will make it easier."

It was very gracious of Charles to say no more than this, since he and Ralph were still having a hard time

with Anne and Emily. It seemed well-nigh impossible to convince them that their safer course was to be still. Their struggles to keep from drowning only made it that much more the probable, as well as sadly hampered the efforts of the two brave lads who were struggling heroically to keep them from really going down.

At length Chi-co-la, seeing how desperate was the strait, turned Daniel over to Betty and Henry for a short time, while he sought some means of assisting Charles and Ralph. Soon he reappeared, pushing before him a huge palmetto log he had found along the water's edge.

Charles shouted aloud when he saw it.

"Good for you, Chi-co-la! 'Tis the very thing! Now you two maids will have as fine a craft as you could desire, and you'll see how well we'll keep it afloat."

There was again great difficulty in getting Anne and Emily to catch hold of the log in the right way, one on either side. They vastly preferred to keep hold of Charles and Ralph, for their new craft, which bobbed up and down in such an uncertain manner, did not strike them with any degree of assurance. But finally they were persuaded to take hold of the log by throwing an arm across its rough surface; while Charles and

Ralph, swimming beside them, steadied the log and kept it in the right course.

"Keep still," cautioned Charles, "and see here, Emily, don't even bat a lash, or move your tongue a hair's breadth or more on one side of your mouth than the other, else over you go."

Emily gave him a saucy look. She could afford to be bolder now, since she had that good stout log to buoy her up, though it did bob up and down in a most startling fashion now and then.

"And you, Mistress Anne," said Ralph mischievously, "must not dare play Lot's wife in the effort to see what we are doing back here, else over, too, you may go."

"Oh, I am not so afraid of that now," declared Anne, looking almost as assured as Emily. "What I fear most are alligators. Oh, oh!" she cried in sudden recollection, and made an attempt to draw her feet from the water—a movement that caused the log to lurch dangerously. "Daniel said the river was full of them. You don't think now one could come around before we know it, do you, Charles?"

"Not if you keep still," declared Charles; "but if you cry out in that way, I think you'll call up more than one, a whole company of them, in fact."

That was enough for Anne; from that moment not a sound escaped her. Soon Betty, who from time to time noted her cousin, saw that Anne's teeth were chattering, and that she was shivering as though overcome by cold.

"I fear the plunge into the water will make her sick," Betty said to herself in some dismay, "though the day is so mild. But far better this than the awful death that might have overtaken her; yea, that might have overtaken us all," and Betty shuddered at the thought of what had come so near to them.

"Hist!" said Chi-co-la suddenly, "canoe comes!"

Betty listened, but she could hear naught save the muffled crackling of the fire, which was now dying out along the bank where it had last caught. The heat, too, was getting less and less.

"Hist!" said Chi-co-la again, his ear bent toward the surface of the water. "Two canoes come!"

"Well, I am truly glad!" exclaimed Charles, who now overheard Chi-co-la. "The fire seems dying out on both sides of us, and I was just wondering if we couldn't soon find a landing-place. But the canoes will be better. No doubt if 'tis friends, we can prevail upon them to take us all the way home."

A canoe soon appeared around a bend in the river,

and following close in its wake another. Four Indian rowers were in each, and in the stern of the forward boat an Indian, whose manner showed his importance, was sitting with folded arms. A crest of eagle feathers adorned his head, while his buckskin jacket fairly glistened with beads. He had been smoking, and the bowl of his pipe was on his knee, but at sight of the novel craft carried by the Ashley's current, the pipe dropped from his mouth, and he showed as much amazement as an Indian could display.

Chi-co-la hailed him. It was an appeal for help, and almost at the same moment the Indian gave a command to his rowers, and both boats were considerably slackened in pace.

They had come now almost opposite to the swimmers, and as the Indian in the forward boat leaned toward Chi-co-la to answer his appeal, an exclamation escaped Betty.

"Why, 'tis Walkulla!" she said. "He must have remained several days in Charles Town, or he may have gone with the second cargo of skins."

Walkulla looked at Chi-co-la, and then at the young swimmers, who by this time were showing considerable signs of exhaustion, hampered as they were by their clothing.

The rowers had now entirely ceased their efforts, and the canoes were slowly drifting backward with the current, while the hand of more than one of those battling in the water eagerly grasped a boat's side for support.

"Fire?" ejaculated Walkulla. "Eough! big blaze!" and he sniffed as though the smoke were something he delighted in.

"Yes, chief," replied Charles, who by this time had his hand firmly clasped along the edge of Walkulla's canoe, "'twas indeed a big blaze, and we came near losing our lives by it. We want you to take us to the fort, please, and you shall not lose anything."

"Can't go to fort!" said Walkulla decidedly.

Here was a predicament, and had Chi-co-la, like Charles, waited for the old Indian's consent, serious, indeed, might have been the plight of the weaker ones in the water. Chi-co-la, with the aid of the Indian rowers, had begun at once the work of getting all his young charges safely within the boats, so that by the time Charles had begun his second plea to Walkulla, all were safely out of the water, except Charles and Ralph, and in a very few moments thereafter, they, too, felt the clasp of friendly hands that drew them to the canoes.

"Can't go to fort!" said Walkulla again, and

shaking his head with vigor. "No business there. Don't want to go."

He said these words looking straight at Betty, who was one of those helped into the chief's boat by his rowers.

Despite the surly words, Betty bowed politely, then gave him a beaming smile.

"But you'll let the boats take us to a landing near to the village, will you not, chief?" she asked sweetly.

"Eough?" grunted Walkulla, and stared at her as though he had not understood a single word. Walkulla was very much of an old fox. He understood English very well indeed, but admitted doing so only when it suited him.

Chi-co-la repeated Betty's request.

"Don't know," replied Walkulla; "maybe;" and he eyed Betty speculatively from one corner of his eye.

"Please, good chief," entreated Betty. "We almost lost our lives in the fire, and we are much exhausted from our race and the time we have been in the water. Our clothes, too, are wet. I fear my cousin will take a dreadful cold. She is not strong," and now Betty glanced toward Anne, who, in the other boat, was coughing in a most distressing way. "Oh, please,

good Walkulla, help us get home with all the speed you can."

A part of this Walkulla appeared to understand. The remainder Chi-co-la translated.

"Young squaw little good!" declared Walkulla with a nod of the head toward Anne, and seeming to give utter disregard to Betty's request. But, to Betty's joy, she saw that the canoes had been turned, and were now heading down stream. There was a look, too, on Chi-co-la's face that assured Betty. Her chief concern now was for Anne. She was still coughing painfully, and shivering, too, in a way that gave great uneasiness to Betty.

Suddenly Chi-co-la bent toward the other canoe and spoke to one of the rowers. The next moment Betty saw a good warm Indian blanket given to her cousin, and then, for a time at least, her concern for Anne was abated.

She turned her attention now to Walkulla. What a splendid opportunity this was to find out from him, if she could, why he did not bring his skins any longer to the Dorchester warehouse.

She raised her head again, and, looking at the chief, gave him another smile. How Betty could smile! It was a smile to make any good Indian's heart go warm

within him. But then it had not been shown that Walkulla was really a good Indian.

His eyes deepened a little, but he gave no further sign.

"Have you been to Charles Town, Walkulla?" asked Betty pleasantly.

"Yah," said the chief, but that was all; so she did not know if this were the return from a second trip or the one made some days before.

"We saw you go down the river, Walkulla," said Betty, making a bold move now.

"Yah! yah!" replied the chief. "Young squaw on bank. Father there, too, and brother."

Betty could not tell if Walkulla were near a smile or not; but she had a suspicion of it, though his face was still quite stolid.

"Oh, Walkulla!" cried Betty, and making no further effort now at restraint; "what made you pass us by so? Why did you not bring your skins and meat as usual to my father?"

"What young squaw say?" asked Walkulla gravely, as he turned to Chi-co-la.

Betty's questions were repeated.

"Charles Town big place," he grunted. "So!" and he spread out his arms to their furthest limit. "Wal-

kulla went to see. Business there. That carry Walkulla, too. Heap business!"

"My father was so disappointed," said Betty again, and now her voice had a little quiver in it. "It was too bad, Walkulla, you did not bring him the skins, when he wanted them so much, and would have paid you well for them."

"Master Blew no longer true friend to Indian!" declared Walkulla suddenly, and shaking his head with vigor. "Got no use for Indian, only what can make out of him. Fool 'em big some day. Make pretty talk now, but talk no good. Get big clutch on Indian 'fore long; then squeeze, squeeze till like orange with juice gone."

A sharp exclamation came from Betty.

"Oh, Walkulla, who could have told you such wicked things about my father? They are every one false. The Indians have no better friend anywhere than he. Who could have told you these untruths, Walkulla?"

But the chief evidently had no more to say to her. He turned his face aside for a remark to Chi-co-la, and at that moment Charles, who was some feet away, and who had been for several moments trying to make his words intelligible to one of the rowers, spoke to Betty:

"Betty, why are you talking in such loud tones? Now, don't be so foolish, dear lass, as to say anything the chief won't like. He will put us out again in the river if you do."

Betty could only shake her head. Her heart was thumping so she could scarcely breathe, much less reply to Charles in speech.

Some one had filled Walkulla's mind with prejudice against her father. False and wicked things had been told him concerning the Indian Agent at Dorchester, and the Agent was her father, her dear, good father! who never had anything but the kindest feelings for the Indians, the best intent toward them. Who could have been so wicked? Almost at the moment the question was asked, Betty had her answer.

"Friends!" ejaculated Walkulla suddenly. "All friends!"

Then he fumbled along the bottom of the canoe near where he was sitting and drew something therefrom. It was a pipe with a tiny curl of smoke still issuing from its bowl. Walkulla had evidently settled it there with some care when he ceased smoking, else would it have set the skin robe afire upon which he was sitting.

"Smoke!" he said again to Chi-co-la. "Smoke! All friends!"

As the bowl of the pipe was brought fully into view, Betty gave a start and came near crying out. And no wonder! for the pipe that Walkulla was now handing to Chi-co-la in so friendly a way, was the very pipe Master Jonas Pettibone had sat and smoked in the hall of Aunt Joan's home not so many days since! There could be no error concerning it. That ugly, grinning head with the wolfish fangs had made too deep an impression upon Betty for her to be mistaken now. And what was it Master Pettibone had said? Over and over the words rang through Betty's brain: "I'd not part from this pipe easily, as you may suppose. Nay, 'twould be a mighty favor indeed that would wring it from me!" Yet but a few days had gone since the making of that speech, and now here was the pipe in Walkulla's possession!

Betty had no more speech after that. She could only sit and think and think. How Betty did think! and the thoughts could not have been very pleasant ones, for Betty's face paled and flushed by turns, and now and then her fingers clinched.

Walkulla offered the pipe in turn to Charles and Ralph, repeating the words, "Friends! all friends! smoke! smoke!"

Neither lad smoked, but although they knew it was

very likely to make them sick, still they took a few whiffs at the pipe rather than offend.

"I shouldn't fancy his leaving us again to our own resources," Charles said in an undertone to Ralph, "so I suppose we had better not refuse. But, bah! how I do hate to do it!"

Walkulla seemed exceedingly proud of his pipe. He stroked it again and again after he had received it back, and, emptying the ashes out of it very carefully, polished it inside and out with a bit of deerskin. Then he laid it away in his beaded pouch.

CHAPTER XIII

A FIRE BRIGADE

WALKULLA'S rowers, under the direction of their chief, headed the canoes toward a landing about a half mile away from the Blew home.

As our young friends were on the point of disembarking, a thought struck Betty. Walkulla would assuredly expect some reward. Even now she could see the gleam of anticipation in his eye. It would not do to promise him a gift; something must be forthcoming on the spot, never mind how simple. Betty had but one thing in her possession that could be bestowed upon Walkulla in the sense of a gift, and this she valued highly. When she thought of Walkulla's disagreeable words and recalled his present attitude toward her father, she felt that she just could not bestow her treasure. Yet she wished to conciliate him. It meant much if he could be won back to his friendship with her father.

Betty's one available gift, the treasure she valued highly, was a necklace of gold-colored beads that had

been given her by a relative in Boston Town. Disengaging the necklace from about her throat, Betty leaned toward the chief, smiling as bravely as she could.

"You have been very kind to us to-day, Chief Walkulla, so I leave this gift with you. But you must promise to come to the village to see me, for there will be something else I'll have to give you."

Shrewd Betty was thinking how much it might mean if the chief could be gotten to the village again.

Walkulla's eyes gleamed greedily at sight of the shining beads. He was thinking of his favorite squaw, and of what a treasure they would prove to her.

He was leaning forward to receive them, and Betty was on the point of placing them in his hand when Charles stopped her.

"Wait a moment, Bess," he said. "If you are going to give the chief such a gift as that, then I think he ought to do more for us. Look at Anne! Poor girl! 'tis very plain she'll not be able to walk all this distance to the house. She can scarcely sit up, let alone walk. For that present you are bestowing Walkulla should take us to the fort landing."

"Can't go to fort!" declared Walkulla, and glowering at Charles. The old Indian's look said plainly that it was none of his business to interfere.

"*You* can't go, perhaps," said Charles determinedly, "because of some scruple I know naught of"—at that moment Charles was of the opinion that Walkulla was in his father's debt, and so was ashamed to face him—"but there's naught to hinder your rowers, is there, chief? My sister will give you the beads if you will send us to the fort landing," added Charles steadily.

Walkulla looked at Charles, and then at the beads. The latter glittered temptingly, and again he saw his squaw's eyes of approval as she received them.

"Give beads, then," he said. "Walkulla go ashore here. Wait for canoes' return."

Thus it was arranged. The chief took the beads, placed them in his pouch; then went ashore and squatted complacently upon the bank. The last they saw of him as the canoes turned away, he was having recourse again to the solace of his pipe—that pipe which Betty knew was in part the price of her father's undoing.

"I declare, Charles," said Ralph, "that was a brilliant stroke on your part. How did you ever come to think of it? And so quickly, too! A little more and the old rogue would have had the beads guileless Mistress Betty was on the point of bestowing. Had that happened, then, indeed, we should have been left to foot it home as best we could."

"Nay," said Charles, and trying not to look too pleased, "don't call it 'brilliant,' 'twas nothing of the kind, but just a thought that came in time. This old head of mine isn't usually quick, as you have intimated, Ralph. But, then, 'tis better to have a thick skull, I am sure you will admit, no more than half full of plain common sense, than one like an eggshell so full of its own conceit it can't even advance an idea without forthwith bursting with its own importance."

Ralph laughed.

"I never thought of it in that way before," he admitted.

"I declare, Charles, you are too funny," said Betty, smiling. "But I for one am truly glad you did come to the rescue in that way. It would have been too bad for Anne to have had all that additional fatigue."

They found the village in quite a stir on their account. The fire had been noted shortly after it started, and there were some who thought the young people had shown no more wisdom than to set it in order to get rid of the rubbish. Those same ones, too, thought as the young people had set it, they would know how to care for it. But as the volumes of smoke increased, and the fire seemed spreading considerably, then the

alarm grew, and very shortly a rescue party, headed by Edward, left the fort.

The party had not yet returned, so the anxiety deepened. Great was the rejoicing when the Indian canoes put in at the landing with all the young people safe aboard.

The nearness of home seemed to have a cheering effect upon Anne. She had brightened up considerably. She was even able to walk by being supported on either side. Yet the poor girl showed plainly the effects of the terrible ordeal.

"I declare, Anne," said Betty, as she kissed her cousin's pale cheek, "your eyes look like those of the Mourning Bride. You must get more life into them, dear."

"I am trying," said Anne, and by way of encouraging Betty, smiled feebly.

They had no more than reached the house, when the rescuing party returned. They had come back for further assistance, as they had been completely baffled in their search, no trace whatever of the young people being found. Anxiety was changed to joy when they found every one safe at the village. The fire had burned itself out. The clearing had stopped it on the one side and the river on the other. Where it had

leaped the river, it had not burned far, a swamp having prevented its further progress. Not a great deal of damage had been done except to timber and to some fences. A few head of cattle, too, had been caught by the flames. Everything about the church was intact, as the fire had burned away from it. Still, Daniel's prank had indeed proved serious.

As to Daniel himself, he did not escape the punishment Charles had threatened. It was meted out to the young rogue in full measure, not because Charles had promised it, but because his parents felt that he did most justly deserve it. From that day to the day of his majority, Daniel never again laid hand on his father's tinder-box. When he reached man's estate, he had one of his own.

To the relief of all, Anne experienced no very serious effect from the wild race and the wetting. She was in bed two days, kept under warm blankets and plied with hot drinks, and for two or three days thereafter she had a hacking cough, but that was all. Betty frequently teased Anne by declaring that she got well just as soon as she discovered they were on the point of sending for Elder William Pratt, whose invariable remedy for fever brought on by cold was powdered toads' thighs in tar and honey. As to Betty and Emily,

they suffered no ill effects at all, since each was a hardy young frontier-woman.

The thrilling events of that day, however, left a lasting impression. It had indeed been a race for life. They shuddered to think what might have been the consequences had they lagged in their pace.

"Oh, it was dreadful!" said Anne, describing her feelings to Mrs. Blew. "When I looked back and saw the great wall of fire, I felt that it must overtake me. I grew suddenly so weak, I am sure I could not have moved at all had it not been for Ralph Portman."

"He is a dear, good lad," replied Mrs. Blew; "so much like his father, always thinking of others."

"It would have been awful indeed," continued Anne, "had not the clearing and the river stopped the fire. How do they manage to put out fires here, cousin?" she asked suddenly.

"They have all sorts of makeshifts, my child. When 'tis a forest fire, they endeavor to put a stop to it by whipping it out with brooms of pine brush. Again, they clear spaces in the forest and drag the timber and brush beyond reach of the fire. When the conflagration breaks out in the village, which has not many times occurred, I am happy to say, then we use the water from the river, getting it in every sort of

vessel that comes to hand. We do sadly need some organized system, and Philip, Gabriel, and others have been talking about it for quite a while. I dare say something will be done shortly."

"You ought to see them put out a fire in Boston Town!" cried Betty, her eyes sparkling. "I know that is what Anne is thinking about. Every family has fire buckets; our cousin, Penuel Sumner, keeps a half-dozen or more. They are made of stout leather, and his name is on each one."

"He must be afraid of thieves," said Charles. "Now, who would want to steal a fire bucket?"

Betty gave him a little frown, then proceeded:

"So soon as the fire breaks out, and the town is notified by the beating of drums and the ringing of bells, then every one big enough to do so picks up a bucket and runs to give all the help possible. Sometimes when it is so that members of a family cannot start to the fire right away, then buckets are thrown out of the doors and windows for others who are passing by to pick up and use."

"Must be a mighty honest town," commented Charles again. "Don't think, though, I'd risk my property that way, even in Boston."

"We are honest folks, I do assure you, Master

Charles," replied Anne, a little gleam of mischief in her eye; "so, if you are thinking of going there to pick up something other people trust you with, you'd better stay away. Boston Town is truly a bad place for light-fingered folks. They punish them most severely."

"I will pay you for that yet," declared Charles, as he made a movement as though he would give Anne's ear a tweak.

"Go on, dear, with your description of the fire," said Mrs. Blew to Betty. "These children must have their nonsense."

"When the fire is reached," continued Betty, "then two lines are formed. Along one line the buckets filled with water are passed from hand to hand, while the empty ones come back along the other line. It's a fine sight, I do assure you! Several fires happened while I was in Boston Town, and more than half of them were put out ere great damage was done. Everybody worked with such a hearty will—men, women, and even children.

"One funny thing," continued Betty, and with a little teasing look in Anne's direction, "is that if any one tries to break through the fire lines, even for the purpose of trying to save effects from a burning building, he is at once drenched with water. There are certain

persons detailed to attend to the effects, and if others try to break through the lines to assist, they are at once looked upon as hindering the work, and buckets of water are poured on them.

“Poor Anne was nearly drowned in this way not long before we left Boston Town. Within the fire lines, two women loaded down with finery they were seeking to save, kept shrieking for help to get out with their burdens. One of them also had a child by the hand. This was too much for Anne’s good heart. She at once sprang toward the lines, seeking to break through so as to help the distracted women, whereupon two buckets of water were emptied full upon her.”

“Oh, dear me!” ejaculated Caroline. “Why, that was too bad! And was the finery ruined, too?”

“Now, just listen to you, Sister Caroline!” exclaimed Betty. “You are thinking more of the finery than you are of poor drenched Anne. Well, to ease your mind, let me tell you that the women got out all right with their fine duds and that the child, too, was unharmed. But poor Anne had a dreadful cold, for she would not go home at once to change her clothes. It was the result of this imprudence, I think, that fully determined Cousins Penuel and Martha to send Anne home with me for the winter.”

“Well, I am glad of that piece of imprudence,” asserted Charles gallantly, “even if it did give you a cold, Anne.”

“Thank you, Charles. Now I’ll forgive you for what you intimated with reference to the honesty of our folks in Boston Town.”

“As I will you, Mistress Anne, for the advice to stay away unless I wished to be apprehended for light-fingered propensities.”

“You children certainly do love to spar,” said Mrs. Blew, and she looked at them indulgently.

“But what became of the buckets that were thrown out of doors and trusted to passers-by?” asked Charles suddenly of Betty. “You haven’t told us that part yet, Bess.”

“Oh, they have fire-wardens to attend to those,” replied Betty.

“When the fire is over they take charge of all buckets that are without owners. The next day the owners appear, pick out their buckets, and carry them home again.”

“Well, that’s an excellent plan,” declared Mrs. Blew. “I think we must have something like it here.”

Mr. Blew coming in shortly, the method the folks of Boston Town had of fighting the fires was outlined

to him, and he, too, agreed that it was excellent and could not be improved upon under the circumstances.

“We must try it here,” he said emphatically. “‘Fire is indeed a good servant, but a bad master.’ As it is now, we are much at its mercy when it breaks out. I’ll call a meeting to-morrow and have arrangements begun at once for the making of the buckets. You and Anne can give us such description of them as will be easy to follow,” he concluded to Betty. “Doubtless we’ll submit the first ones made for your approval.”

“Just see there!” cried Charles teasingly. “What a magnificent prospect is opening before you two maids. Who knows but that you’ll soon be setting yourselves up to take charge of the entire fire department!”

“If we do,” declared Betty, “we’ll see to it, sir, that you are made to work up to your full capacity.”

On the very afternoon of the fire, Betty had told her father of the unsuccessful search for the paper.

“I feared so, lass,” he said; “but you are a dear, loving daughter. You have done all you could to help me.”

“Nay, not all yet, father,” affirmed Betty bravely. “There is more yet that I can do, and I will.”

He thought she meant that she would search the church, but Betty's words had a deeper significance than that.

He shook his head slowly.

"There is no use searching further for the paper, my lass. I must do without it. To-morrow I will take on a bold heart and make out the account and dispatch it to Charles Town."

Many times it was trembling on Betty's lips to tell her father of her discovery concerning Master Pettibone, and of the manner in which he had purchased Walkulla. But she could not yet. Her father had said she must "name no names." Yet Betty was but biding her time. Sooner or later the revelation must come. Plans were formulating with Betty as to the surest way to trap Master Pettibone. Mere accusation would do more harm than good, especially at this time.

Though Mr. Blew had delayed so long the sending in of his accounts, this was not at all his usual way of acting. We have seen why he thus delayed with reference to the accounts. As a general thing, he was a man of quick action. This was evidenced by the promptness with which he put into effect his intention to organize the Dorchester colonists into a fire brigade.

They quickly responded to his call, and showed both earnest desire and readiness to take hold of the plans. Thus in a day or so preparations for the manufacture of the fire buckets were going forward at a fine rate. As Mr. Blew had intimated, Betty and Anne were frequently called upon for hints and even direction.

“ ’Tis no wonder Master Blew is taking all this trouble to organize a fire brigade,” Betty overheard one neighbor say to another. “ He dreads fire, and I do not blame him. That was indeed a disastrous one that occurred at the warehouse.”

“ By the way, have you ever heard if Blew has found the supervisor’s receipt? ”

“ I do not know, but I think not. Isn’t it too bad, now, the things people are saying about its loss? ”

“ Why, what are they saying? ”

“ Several things. For one, that he doesn’t care to find it; that he’s better off without it, in fact.”

“ Oh, I can’t believe anything like this of Master Blew. He’s an honest man.”

“ So, too, I think, but people will talk, you know. Anyhow, I wish he’d do something about it. He’s only hurting himself by dilly-dallying so.”

Betty had not intended to hear all these words. When the two neighbors had begun talking, she had

tried to move away, but could not. Something seemed chaining her to the spot. The two men passed on, not knowing she had been near and had overheard them. They would have felt keen regret had they known, for they really were friends to the Blews, and Betty, the high-spirited lass, was quite a favorite with both.

Betty felt herself grow hot and grow cold by turns. Oh, how could people talk so about her dear father, who was the very soul of honor? But, of course, it had all come about through the evil work of Master Pettibone. Oh, how she longed to confront that mean spirit! tell him his wickedness was discovered, and dare him to do her father any more injury after all she had to reveal of his evil work.

One thing gave Betty comfort, even though her heart was sorely troubled by the conversation she had overheard. Her father had at last sent in his accounts for the quarter preceding the fire. He had told her so four days ago. When this was known, the mischievous tongues would surely be silenced.

CHAPTER XIV

FOUND UNDER THE SASSAFRAS BUSHES

THERE was a dear old garden adjoining the Blew house that was a delight to every one who loved flowers. Vegetables, too, had their time and place, but flowers were there all the year through.

This garden was Mrs. Blew's especial pride. Most of the seeds and bulbs with which it had been planted had been brought from the New England home; but others had been obtained from Charles Town. It was such a joy to Mrs. Blew to find that in this mild climate there were some flowers that would grow out of doors from May to May.

She had utilized every space. Each bed had its attractive display, yet the flowers did not seem crowded. Sweet pinks were there, sweet williams, and sweet alysum, too; candy-tuft and poppies, Canterbury bells, and fairy stretches of foxglove and of snowy phlox, each in its season. There, too, were snowdrops, crocuses, and the dainty pansy in its velvet dress; though it was not called pansy then, but "three-faces-under-a-hood," and "jump-up-and-kiss-me."

Against the wall grew tall flowering shrubs, syringas, lilacs, crimson almond, oleanders, and the like. Two magnolias from the swamps had been transplanted and were growing finely. How rich their fragrance when the snowy blossoms began to unfold!

Near the center of the garden was the sundial, and on it inscribed the verse Mrs. Blew had copied from a dial in the garden of a friend in Boston Town:

“With warning hand I mark Time’s rapid flight,
From life’s glad morning to its solemn night;
And like God’s love I also show
There’s light above me, by the shade below.”

It was just a week after the fire. Betty, Anne, and Emily were in the garden and standing near the sundial. It was a favorite resort for them. They liked to watch the shadow of the sun as it crept on and on, this side of the gnomon and then the other. They liked, too, to read the verse. It held a fascination they could not define. There was a solemnity, too, that kept them silent for some little time after it had been read.

“It makes me draw my breath in very deep,” said Emily, “and sometimes I wonder if I am going to find it again. To think we who are living now will some day be gone, will lie as silent as the dead are in their graves.”

"Life is truly a solemn thing," said Anne, with a shudder. "Oh, that it should be given us to live joyously only to find grim death at the ending!"

"Nay, not so," declared Betty. "Life is given us to make the most of; to live as nobly and as bravely and as cheerily as we can, so that when we come face to face with death we shall have no dread fear of it."

"Why, Elizabeth Blew, how you talk! As if every one does not fear death, never mind how well and nobly he or she has lived. Oh, I think death is terrible! It makes me grow cold to think I must come to it!"

"You speak truly, Emily," said Anne, and her face was very white now. "Fittingly is Death called the 'King of Terrors.'"

"'Tis only a physical fear," declared Betty bravely. "The soul will rise superior to that. Forget you the cheering message on the dial? There's God's love over all. Yes, light up there, though the shadow may be deep here. But come Anne, come Emily, banish those doleful faces. See how bright, how sweet is everything around us. Life is indeed joyous; our Father's best gift to us. Let us enjoy it. And remember we but lay down life here to find it again up there—brighter, better, broader than anything we have dreamed of here."

"I declare, Betty," said Emily, "you can talk almost as well as Parson Lord. Now, what do you think he will say when he hears you have been preaching his sermons?"

"'Twas no sermon, I'd have you to believe, Emily, but only a little bit of talk right out of my heart."

At that moment Caroline's voice was heard calling Betty, and in somewhat excited tones.

Betty hastened to meet her.

"What is it, sister?" she asked.

"Have you seen Drusilla—I mean recently?"

"Nay, not since breakfast, I believe. Why, has anything happened to her, think you, Caroline?"

Betty's voice, too, had an unsteady ring now.

"We fear she has run away; that she has gone, in fact, to the forest strip where the men are cutting the winter's wood. She begged to go with Simon, but mother forbade it."

"Then she surely did not go," said Betty.

"But I think she did. You know how stubborn she can be at times. Mother is at Madam Roddey's, and I would like to have it settled about Drusilla ere she returns. It will worry her so to find the child gone. I am overseeing Miranda's baking, so there's no one else but you and Anne, Betty, and Emily, too, if she

will go. And do hurry, dears; I am so nervous about the falling trees."

"Certainly I'll go, Caroline, and gladly. Dru is a naughty little thing, and surely mother will punish her if she has been disobedient."

"There's no doubt about that," replied Caroline.

Betty, Anne, and Emily now set off toward the strip of forest something more than a mile away, where for a week past all the able-bodied men and boys who could be spared from other tasks had been getting the winter fuel ready for hauling.

The strip of woods was beyond the lower end of the village. Between it and the last houses there was a stretch of fields that had been planted in maize, pumpkins, and the like. But the crops had long since been gathered, and there was only a waste of brown stubble covering the fields now, with a fringe of sassafras bushes beyond and a few dogwoods and turkey oaks.

It was a glorious day, though well past the middle of November. There was just enough crispness in the air to make walking pleasant. The girls had thrown back their hoods. A bracing breeze from the sea blew the hair about their temples, and deepened the color in their cheeks. Even Anne's face was glowing. The sky stretched above and around them like a great blue sea

on which all manner of white craft were sailing, sailing for ports near and ports far away. On a zig-zag stretch of fence a Bob White in speckled coat had perched himself, and was whistling insistently to his mate to come and be off with him ere the hunters took them by surprise.

The girls had crossed the fields, passed the stretch of sassafras and dogwood, and were nearing the strip of forest whence the sound of the axes came now plainly, when suddenly there appeared not far away Simon Dale with Drusilla upon his shoulder.

"Oh, you naughty, naughty puss!" cried Betty, as she pounced upon her. "What did make you run away and frighten us all so, Moppet?"

"Wanted to see tree fall!" announced Mistress Drusilla defiantly. "So comed."

"I brought her back as soon as I could," Simon said to Betty. "I had to wait to help with a team that broke down. I didn't know she was there till a smart while; for the sly little minx hid from me at first."

"Thank you, Simon," said Betty. "We'll take charge of her now. Oh, Drusilla, how very, very naughty you have been! And Beautiful will surely punish you, don't you know she will, Drusilla? Did she not tell you that you must not go?"

Drusilla began to sob.

“Wanted to see tree fall!” she reiterated. “Wanted to go with Simon to see tree fall!”

Drusilla was still defiant, though the tears might mean that she was verging toward contrition. No doubt when Drusilla came face to face with her mother she would be very contrite indeed.

The girls were again approaching the strip of sassafras bushes, Anne and Emily in front, and Betty bringing up the rear with Drusilla dragging her feet and laying all the weight she could upon her sister. Just across the field at this point a gully ran. It had been washed deeper and deeper by numerous rains. So deep a furrow had it made that the field in its vicinity had been abandoned when the last crop had been planted. The gully ran on until it disappeared beneath the sassafras bushes.

Suddenly Emily stopped.

“What was that?” she asked. “Did you not hear a sound?”

“Why, yes,” replied Anne, “I hear several sounds. There is still the ring of the axes, a bird is twittering in a bush near by, and I hear, too, a squirrel cracking nuts, I think.”

“But I mean none of these. Hush! there it is again!

'Tis like some one groaning. Do you not hear it now? "

Yes, both Anne and Betty heard it now plainly, for the sound was repeated.

"It is some one in pain, it seems," said Betty. "It comes from the ditch beneath the sassafras bushes. No doubt 'tis some one who has fallen in there and hurt himself. Here, Emily, take charge of Drusilla for me. Don't let her run back again to the forest."

"Betty," asked Anne, somewhat sharply, "what are you going to do? "

"Going to find out who is in trouble," promptly replied Betty, "and to see what help we can give."

"Oh, do come back," plead Anne. "It may be some one or ones who will harm you."

"I think there is no prospect of that," replied Betty confidently. "Whoever it is is in trouble. Do you not hear the groans again? There's no likelihood, then, that I shall be harmed. Pray, do not hold to me so, Anne dear; 'tis my duty to find out if one really is in trouble."

She carefully approached the edge of the ditch, and, pressing back the overhanging bushes, peered down. All this while Anne was clinging to Betty. Though her heart was quivering with some nameless fear,

Anne's devotion, nevertheless, was unquestioned. She could not let Betty approach the danger alone.

As the sassafras bushes were parted and an Indian's head, crowned by a tuft of feathers, was disclosed, a sharp cry came from Anne.

"Oh, Betty, do come away, dear. Don't you see it is an Indian? and there may be others."

"'Tis an Indian, true enough," replied Betty, "but one, I am sure, who will not harm us. He has fallen into the ditch and hurt himself, I think, and I see no others."

Attracted by the sound of their voices, the Indian now turned his head and looked toward them, muttering unintelligibly as he did so. His glance too, had much of vacancy in it, while Betty could see that his eyes were bright and feverish. He was half lying, half sitting against the embankment, and made no effort to move himself. Doubtless, he could not.

"He has not only hurt himself by falling into the ditch, but I think he is sick, too. I am going down there to speak to him."

"Oh, Betty, pray do not," urged Anne. "He may really do you harm. He looks like he was out of his mind."

"He will not harm me, I am sure," replied Betty.

"He is only suffering. When he finds I want to help him, you will see how grateful he will be."

It did not take Betty long to reach the bottom of the gully, for it was not very deep, only about six feet.

As Betty had predicted, as soon as she spoke kindly to the Indian, he looked at her gratefully. He was certainly sick. Betty was fully convinced of this within a few minutes. He was, too, owing to the high fever, partly out of his head. But this did not seem to be all that was the matter with him. He lay in a cramped position, with one leg doubled up under him. As Betty, trying to draw him into a more comfortable position, touched this leg, he groaned again sharply. She was convinced, then, that this leg had been injured by his falling into the ditch.

"We must go and get help," said Betty, "and have him carried to the village. He cannot stay here and suffer."

Fortunately, she found Edward and Chi-co-la without much trouble. A litter was made, and the Indian carried to the Blew house. He seemed to recognize from the beginning that all that was being done for him was in friendship, and so offered no protest.

There was a little room at the Blew home that

opened out from the kitchen. This Miranda Welch, the hired woman, had occupied until the time she had married Simon Dale, and they had gone to a little home of their own, though they both still served the Blews.

Some clean, fresh straw was brought, and blankets, and in a little while the sick Indian had a couch, doubtless as luxurious as any he had ever occupied. It was found that he was not only suffering from what was called swamp fever, but he had dislocated his ankle. With Chi-co-la's help, Mother Blew's strong, skilled hands soon had the dislocated bone safely back into its socket; and it was her hand, also, that prepared the tea of herbs to cool the fever. Soon the Indian was sleeping, after having bestowed many grateful looks, as well as words, upon his benefactors.

Betty overheard Chi-co-la say:

"He's a Kussoe," and then Betty felt her heart go right into her mouth, for the Kussoes had never proven very friendly toward the Dorchester colonists. Indeed, it had been rumored of late that they had assumed something of a hostile attitude.

Charles could not forbear remarking to Betty:

"Oh, Elizabeth Blew, suppose now you have brought in a stick that before we know it will be cracking our

heads. Chi-co-la says the Indian is surely a Kussoe. Think you not he may have come only to spy on us? ”

It was an unpleasant thought, but Betty was ready with her answer.

“What harm could a poor, sick Indian like that do us, Charles? and crippled as he is! Even if he is an enemy, he is helpless now. When he is strong and well, then we’ll send him on his way again, and surely he will have gratitude enough not to harm us.”

“But think what information he may have gained in the meantime. He can go back home and tell his people all about our town and its defenses.”

“Charles, I really and truly believe he will not do that. How could he, when we have befriended him in his need? ”

“You always were a trusting one, Betty.”

“’Tis happier to be that way, Charles. Suspicion makes one so miserable.”

Mr. and Mrs. Blew, Aunt Joan, and Uncle Gabriel all stood firmly by Betty. She had done only an act of humanity. The Indian had been in great distress when Betty found him, and he was unquestionably sick. Even if he were an enemy, he was powerless now to do harm. He might not live; but should he get well,

why, they could send him away ere he had an opportunity to gain information of any importance.

By the end of the third day the Indian was able to sit up, so effective had Mrs. Blew's cooling draughts proven. In three days more he could drag himself to a corner of the great fireplace in the kitchen. He seemed to enjoy sitting there, basking in the warmth. His eyes watched intently all that Mrs. Blew and Betty did. Now and then he murmured grateful words, some of which they understood, for he seemed to have a fair knowledge of English. His name, they learned, was San-u-tus-kee; he had traded much in Charles Town, and his home was many miles away.

This was all he would tell, except that he had been returning from Charles Town when he had been seized by sudden illness, had wandered away from his companions, and fallen into the ditch. Beyond this information San-u-tus-kee would not go. He seemed to set a close watch upon himself with reference to all further disclosure. Sometimes there was an uneasy feeling in the hearts of those who tended San-u-tus-kee. Had he told them the truth with reference to his presence in the neighborhood of the ditch? Was there not something that he strove earnestly to keep from them?

“He is a sly one, I am sure,” declared Charles, who had felt a prejudice against San-u-tus-kee from the first. “Now if our Betty’s tender heart doesn’t bring us into trouble, then I’ll be surprised.”

But Betty herself seemed to have no thought of trouble. Indeed, her heart felt lighter at that time than it had for many days. Edward had been to see the Cacique of Stono. He had carried the deer’s hoof with its silver trimmings, given by the great chief years ago to his little adopted daughter, and which when sent by her meant always that the ear of Ne-pis-saw-nee was open to her. The chief promised Edward that he would do everything he could to bring the Indians back to their trading relations with Mr. Blew. Every bale of skins and cask of meat the destination of which he had it in his power to direct should find its way to Dorchester warehouse. The chief was surely keeping his promise, for already though but a few days had gone, the receipts were showing a marked increase.

CHAPTER XV

A PUMPKIN PIE DONATION

THE pumpkin pies for which Charles' mouth had so long watered had been made at last, and a generous quantity of them, a round dozen or more, for the neighbors must be remembered as well as the family.

Such an appetizing odor as had filled the house while the baking was going on! Naught could have kept Charles out of the kitchen at that time. The sly rogue pretended that he must keep plenty of wood for the oven; that no one else could do it as well as himself. He was hoping all the while that certain flaky bits would drop from the pies as his mother brought them from oven to table. Perhaps one might accidentally fall and break to pieces, or another might be partly spoiled in the baking. Charles ought to have known his mother's fine cooking better than to have anticipated anything like this. Yet as much as Charles liked pumpkin pies, he was not so greedy for them that he did not realize how greatly superior a cold pumpkin pie was to a hot one, and one that had grown cold in

the right way. But he must have his taste to-day. It was so long to wait for the morrow.

"I am sure," said Charles, "that I can say from my heart that Captain Edward Johnson was right when he wrote, 'If it were not for pumpkins we should be undone.'"

"Yet, Charles," his mother replied, "the early New England colonists did not value the pumpkin highly."

"That was because they did not know how to make it appetizing," declared Charles. "They stewed it and they made it into coarse pumpkin bread. Bah! I wouldn't have cared for it myself. They should have had you, Beautiful, to show them how to make golden pies."

"Thou art but a clumsy flatterer, Charles," declared his mother, but all the same, she looked pleased.

At last the pies were all done, and not an accident, to Charles' chagrin, had happened to a single one. His mouth was still watering, but there was the prospect of the morrow; yet how many hours away that morrow seemed!

Betty had helped to make the pastry, while Anne, too, had assisted, declaring she must learn the art as her cousin practiced it, so as to carry it back with her and surprise her mother. She watched carefully the

mashing and seasoning of the pumpkin, the spices and the amount of sugar needed for each pie.

How tempting the pies looked placed in rows, one behind the other! There were other mouths watering besides Charles'. When the pies had been sufficiently admired, they were carried to the pantry and set on a long shelf in front of a small open window with bars across it.

"Had I not better draw in the shutters, mother?" asked Betty.

"Nay, lass, for then they will merely chill and grow soggy. The cold outside air is what I want for them."

Winter was assuredly coming. There was a decided snip of it in the air. Heavier clothing had been donned, and the young people were glad enough now to draw up about the blazing logs in the evenings. Charles and Daniel had gathered large stores of nuts. They had merry times cracking and eating them as they sat around the fire. Games were played, too, with the kernels; "Hull gull, how many?" and the like. Sometimes Anne and Betty would find their entire store gone. Then there was the fun of borrowing a certain amount of capital on which to begin business again.

Now and then in the evenings Betty and Anne helped

Charles and Daniel shell the corn that was to be pounded into meal and hominy. Various were the devices employed in those early days for freeing the kernels from the cob. How crude, indeed, they seem beside our modern corn shellers! Charles used the edge of a shovel, drawing the cob back and forth across it. Daniel's corn sheller was the rim of a pot, while Betty and Anne, fastening a long-handled frying-pan across a tub, sawed away as though their very existence depended upon it.

The young people had been shelling corn on the night following the baking of the pumpkin pies, and had gone to bed somewhat later than usual. It was about midnight when Betty awakened with a sudden start.

"Hist!" she said to Anne, who had also been aroused by Betty's movement, "I hear a strange noise below. I wonder now if old San-u-tus-kee can be roaming about in search of anything, or if he has gotten the fever in his head again, and has gone stumbling about in the yard? Hist! there 'tis again. Do you not hear it, Anne?"

"Oh, suppose it is Indians!" exclaimed Anne, clinging hard and fast to Betty, "and they are trying to break into the house?"

She was sitting straight up in bed now, and staring

at Betty as well as she could through the dim light made by the moonbeams.

"Oh, I think it isn't anything so bad as that," asserted Betty. "I believe I will go and see," she added suddenly. "It may be San-u-tus-kee, and he will do harm to himself."

"Oh, Betty, please don't. Why do you not call your father? It may be something graver than you think. Don't go to see about it yourself, Betty, please *don't!*"

"But father is so tired, Anne. He has had a hard day at the warehouse. It would be too bad to awaken him unless it were something more serious."

"It may be more serious than you think. Oh, Betty, do call Cousin Edward."

"But he has gone away for the night, do you not remember?"

"Well, Charles then."

"There is the noise again," said Betty. "It sounds now as though it were on the outside of the house. Oh, Anne," with a sudden little cry of dismay, "I do believe 'tis some one trying to steal the pumpkin pies!"

Betty was out of bed in a twinkling, and putting on a part of her clothes; Anne followed suit. She was not going to be left in the room alone.

In the hall they met Charles. He had his musket,

and was stealing along softly. Anne gave a little scream when she saw him. She thought surely he was an Indian. He did look warlike.

"Betty!" he exclaimed, "did you and Anne hear the sounds? At first I thought it was some one trying to break in, and I was about to call father, when I became convinced that it was some one or some animal down about the pantry, and——"

"After the pumpkin pies," finished Betty in teasing tone, as she gave Anne a nudge. "Oh, I might have known *you* would have heard *that*, Charles!"

"Yes, after the pumpkin pies," admitted Charles, with grace. "Don't be hard on me, Mistress Elizabeth. I'll own up that I went to bed thinking about the pumpkin pies, and I have been dreaming about them, too. When I was awakened by the noises my first thought was that a thief was making off with them. I still think this the case."

"So, too, I think," acknowledged Betty. "Let us hasten, Charles, ere mischief is done. I was really afraid for mother to set the pies so near the window, but she felt assured they were too far away for damage to be done."

"Except by some one with a long arm," added Charles.

Following each other closely the three young people hastened below. Even Anne felt very brave now, since Charles had his gun, and she had been assured that the noise was not made by Indians.

As they entered the pantry, they saw in the moonlight a big, black figure near the window on the outside. It had evidently withdrawn to a little distance on their approach, and was standing still, as though waiting to see what they would do.

Anne gave a little scream.

"Oh, what is it?" she cried.

"A bear, as I live!" exclaimed Charles, "and see here, Betty, now isn't this a sight to look upon!"

One of the pumpkin pies had a great piece torn from its side, while a second was entirely missing. As Charles and Betty peered through the window, they saw this second pie snugly resting between the paws of the bear.

"The mean thief!" cried Charles, and raised his musket.

"Oh, Charles," interposed Betty, "what are you going to do?"

"Put an end to the rogue, as is richly deserved."

"Oh, pray, pray don't! Look what is behind her! And do you not see what she is about to do?"

Even as Betty spoke, the bear turned toward two smaller black objects that were a few paces beyond her. Walking to these, she dropped the pie on the ground in front of them. Immediately it was pounced upon and torn apart, then the cubs disappeared.

“Oh, do you not see she has stolen to feed her little ones?” and there was something like a catch in Betty’s voice.

“Why, Betty Blew, I never heard of bears eating pumpkin pies!” exclaimed Anne.

“Well, that they do. They are fond of anything that has fruit or vegetables in its mixture, especially if ’tis sweet.”

“This one likes pumpkin pie quite too well to suit me,” grumbled Charles. “You are very foolish, Betty, not to let me punish her. I will only wound her. She certainly deserves a lesson.”

“Oh, Charles, pray don’t harm her in any way. ’Twould be cruel. Do you not remember how when good Master Christopher Portman found the mother bear in his field stealing the ears of green corn, he would not let her be shot, saying she no doubt had hungry little ones at home to feed. Oh, that was one reason why I always loved good Master Portman so!” and Betty’s eyes shone.

"Betty is right," said Anne. "Pray don't shoot the poor mother bear, Charles."

The bear, having satisfied the hunger of her cubs, was returning toward the window.

"The bold thing!" exclaimed Charles. "I do believe she intends to steal another pie right under our very eyes. I must shoot her, sister; to keep her from doing mischief elsewhere, if no more."

"Nay, Charles, you must not. How can you shoot a poor mother that has stolen only to feed her young? For shame, Charles! I thought you had a tenderer heart than this."

"But, sister, you do not know the amount of destruction that is wrought by these creatures when they start out on their raids."

"Well, she can do no more harm to us, at least," replied Betty.

"But think of the pie she has taken, and the one she has partly ruined. To think, too, those abominable little cubs have had a taste of the pumpkin pies before we have," and Charles almost groaned.

Anne laughed.

"Oh-ho! Master Charles, so that is what hurts, is it?"

"Let us see what she will do now," said Betty, who was intently watching the mother bear.

She had again approached the window, and they heard her whine. No doubt she had intended to finish her depredations, but their proximity to the pies deterred her. Directly they noticed that she put each paw in turn in her mouth, licking it industriously.

"Oh, the poor thing!" cried Betty, "she is trying to get a taste of the pies herself. See her licking her paws! 'Tis too bad! To think she gave the whole pie to the cubs. Charles! Anne! I just can't help it. I dare say you will think me very, very foolish. The others will laugh at me, too, I know. But here goes! I'd rather play ninny than have this lump in my heart. Besides, the pie is partly spoiled anyhow!"

Even while speaking Betty seized hold of the pie with edges torn by the bear's great paw, and ere Anne or Charles had the least idea of what she intended to do, Betty had tossed it through the window to Mother Bear.

"There, you poor thing!" she cried, "is a pie all for yourself. Now, don't give it to the cubs."

"Betty Blew," cried Charles aghast, "have you lost your mind?"

"No, but I have my heart, and to the bear. Oh, I

just could not help it, Charles. 'Tis too pitiful. She did want a taste of the pie so bad."

"I don't blame you, Bess," declared Anne. "You did right. I'm sure she thinks it a royal donation. Just look at her."

The bear had picked up the pie. If a bear can show joy, she was certainly doing so at that moment. Her lip was rolled up, and her teeth gleaming.

"Just look there!" cried Betty delightedly, "how she is smiling at us. Now isn't she pleased! and such nice manners as she is showing. I'm sure no lady could improve on them."

"I declare, Betty, you'd make an oyster laugh!" and Charles looked at her, his face in a broad grin. "But see here, how am I ever to forgive you for throwing that pie out there?"

"Because you had immediate designs on it yourself?" asked Betty.

"Yes," admitted Charles sheepishly. "I saw it was spoiled, and I was 'calculatin',' as Simon says, on carrying it off to bed with me."

"Just to sleep with?" asked Betty teasingly. "Why, what taste, Charles."

"Yes, just to sleep with," he repeated, his eyes twinkling, "after I had tucked it away where no bear

would ever get the chance at it again. Now, Bess, my mouth is still watering, and that old bear has gone off with the first taste of the pies."

"I hope she will eat it herself," said Betty solicitously. "But never mind, Charles, there are still ten pies left, and to-morrow—yes, wait until to-morrow."

"But if you don't move them further away from the window I am of the opinion that we shall not have any even to-morrow."

"That's so," said Betty. "Beautiful wasn't counting on bears when she placed them here."

While they were carefully moving the pies, Mr. Blew appeared.

"Caught!" he cried in gay tone. "Why, children, couldn't you wait until to-morrow? We heard voices," he continued, "and your mother sent me down to see what was the matter. She thought thieves might be after her pies, but 'tis safe to say she had no suspicion I'd find *these* thieves."

"Nay, father," exclaimed Betty, "that is too naughty of you, and I have a good mind to punish you. Thieves *have* been here, however," she continued, "but 'twas not ourselves, as we'll soon prove to you, sir."

Thereupon, aided by Anne and Charles, she gave

him an account of the mother bear's raid, and of the subsequent donation.

Mr. Blew's eyes were glistening when this part was reached.

"That was like you, my Betty," he declared, "and I can't say but that you were right. Still, the bears are very mischievous, and if we adopted your rule of all mercy and no punishment, they would soon destroy our crops."

"But this was a mother bear, and she was feeding her little ones," said Betty softly. "She was such a nice, polite bear. You should have seen how she thanked us."

Mr. Blew smiled.

"Yes, lass. This I think was truly a case for mercy. But what will your mother say?" he added, the smile deepening, "when she hears that two of her pies have fed such visitors as she did not expect?"

"While not one as yet has gone to a single member of her own hungry household," remarked Charles dolefully.

CHAPTER XVI

THE ENEMY AT BAY

MRS. RODDEY was spending the day at the Blews'. For two weeks or more past she and Mrs. Blew had been exchanging visits, following out a kindly custom known in the colony as "change-work." Three days of the week before Mrs. Blew had been at the Roddeys' helping with the soap-boiling and in making a rag carpet. Now Mrs. Roddey had come for her third visit of neighborly interchange of helpfulness. This time it was to aid Mrs. Blew in the task of dipping candles. They were hard at work in the kitchen now, with Caroline as assistant, and Betty looking on so that she might be fully versed in the art when the time came for her to take Caroline's place in the household.

The matter of artificial light had never been a serious one with the Carolina colonists. In the first place, there was an abundance of resinous pine. The fat knots and the long slivers heavy with resin made a light not to be despised. There was, too, much killing of cattle, as the trade in the West Indies in dried meat soon grew

to be a large one; hence there was plenty of tallow to be tried and used for candles. Besides, on every side were vast stretches of the wax myrtle that in season bore the clusters of berries which, when properly prepared, made a dainty candle indeed. It was said that the wife of the Governor, Sir Nathaniel Johnson, preferred them to all others. The candle principally used by the Dorchester colonists was made of tallow, with wicks of hemp or cotton. It was candles of this kind that were now being made in the Blew household.

Two great kettles, well filled with the melted fat, were in the fireplace. Some little distance away, in a cooler spot, two long poles were laid from bench to bench, and across them, placed at regular intervals, smaller sticks called candle rods. To each candle rod was attached a half-dozen or more of carefully straightened candle wicks. The wicks were twisted one way, then doubled and the loop slipped over the candle rod, then the two ends caught and twisted the other way around each other, making a firm wick. A rod with its pendant wicks was dipped into the melted fat, then returned to the poles. Each row was dipped in turn and returned to cool and harden, then dipped again and again, thus gradually growing in size.

It was slow and tiresome work, yet the two ladies,

who were expert dippers, felt assured that they could finish three hundred candles or more by sunset. The hardest part was lifting the heavy kettles on and off the fire.

“What patience it takes!” said Betty.

“All work well done requires patience, dear heart,” her mother replied.

“Yes, Beautiful, I know; but it seems to me that with all the patience I could command I could never do work as skillfully as you and Madam Roddey are doing it.”

“That is because you lack experience, my Betty. One has to try many times and oft make mistakes ere that degree is reached we call perfection in work.”

“To think how many candles we shall have!” exclaimed Betty with satisfaction. “Several hundred, if you and Madam Roddey dip the second day as you have planned.”

“Yes, my child, we have no need to stint ourselves in this good means of giving light,” replied her mother; “but I can remember the time when candles were very scarce in the New England colonies. So scarce were they, in fact, that on several occasions as I recall, my father had the candle blown out while we were at prayer.”

“ Oh, Beautiful, how strange that seems! And now we burn them as long as we please.”

“ Candles brought a great price then,” said Mrs. Roddey. “ In my girlhood days I have known them to sell as high as fourpence apiece, I mean those brought over from England, and they were scarce at that. I have heard my grandfather relate how when Governor Winthrop wrote to his wife enumerating the most necessary articles she must bring, he besought her not by any means to forget candles.”

Betty had served her time watching the candle makers.

“ Go and look for Anne,” her mother said. “ ’Tis such a fine day. I have no doubt she is longing to be out in the sunshine.”

But Anne was busy with a sampler she had promised her mother she would have ready within a certain time, so as to send to her great-aunt on her birthday. It was a very fine sampler indeed, and Mistress Anne was justly proud of it. On it was a picture of the Boston meeting house attended by the Sumner family. It is true that it was not set very straight upon the sampler, and something seemed to be the matter with it near the center, as though the ground beneath that portion of it had suddenly given way; while the old minister stand-

ing in front of the church, in hat and gown, had craned his neck in such a manner that his head seemed toppling from his body, but then Anne had surrounded the whole by such an intricate and lavish pattern of vines and flowers that it really appeared fine. Besides, Anne had worked in at the bottom, in her most painstaking stitch, the verse:

“Now I am young and in my prime,
You see how well I spend my time,
And by my sampler you may see
The care my parents take of me.”

The old great-aunt could not help but be pleased, and Anne had really worked very industriously upon the sampler. Her earnestness was evinced by her failure to join Betty in a visit to the warehouse, for she was just longing to be out in the sunshine and to go where she could watch the graceful current of the river, which always held a peculiar fascination for Anne.

Betty found her father at his desk. He looked unusually cheerful this morning, and Betty soon discovered why. A big consignment of skins had arrived. He was sure now that he was going to fill—and within the required time—the unusually large order from the Governor, that had come some days before, for pelts to be shipped by the *Merry Queen*, which sailed for London twelve days hence.

"I have more than half the required amount," he said cheerfully to Betty, "and I am promised large deliveries for to-morrow and the following days. Thus by the fourteenth day of the month I am sure of having more than the amount ordered to send by the flat-boats to Charles Town in ample time to catch the *Merry Queen* ere she sails.

"Oh, father, I am so glad!" and Betty threw her arms about his neck in her joy.

"That was a wise thought of yours, my Betty, to send in that graceful way to ask the aid of the Cacique. Right royally has he responded. The change is wonderful."

"Has Walkulla brought any wares, father?" asked Betty suddenly.

"Nay, my Bess; not as yet, but I think he will do so after a while. The old chief is no doubt ashamed to face me after his recent conduct. Some of his people, however, have brought me both pelts and meat, and within the last two or three days."

"Father," began Betty, but at that moment there was a step on the outside, the door was pushed open, and in walked Master Jonas Pettibone.

He stared a little when he saw Betty, and seemed to lose something, too, of his composure, but his voice,

nevertheless, had a nonchalant ring, as he sank into a seat, remarking :

“ Good-day, friends ; I hope I find you both well ? ”

“ We are in our usual health, I am thankful to say,” said Mr. Blew quietly.

“ Business good, too, I hear ; picking up mightily of late.”

Mr. Blew looked at him a moment closely ere replying :

“ It has indeed taken a wonderfully good turn. Both pelts and meat are coming in beyond my expectations.”

Master Pettibone coughed, and his eyes, furtive and glittering, took a sidewise glance at Betty.

“ But some time back, in fact, but a short while, if I have been correctly informed, business wasn’t so good. Any reason for its sudden picking up ? ”

Mr. Blew faced him squarely.

“ The trade always increases as the winter deepens. Master Pettibone should know that as well as I.”

Jonas Pettibone fidgeted, looked again at Betty, then addressed Mr. Blew :

“ That’s a mighty big order the Governor sent in to you recently. He must have an exalted opinion as to the resources of this section.”

"He has no more expectation than can be met," replied Mr. Blew, and now he looked annoyed.

"You speak with assurance. I hear 'tis three thousand pelts he wants, and those of a picked class. I hear too, they must be delivered shortly, in fact——"

Master Pettibone stopped.

"Within the next twelve days," Mr. Blew finished for him. "They are to go by the *Merry Queen*, due to sail December 16th. I shall be ready," he added proudly. "I have every detail in hand, even to the flatboats. They have had a thorough overhauling."

"You really expect to get those skins off?"

"By the morning of the 15th," declared Mr. Blew. "The *Merry Queen* does not sail till three o' the clock on the afternoon of the 16th."

"I see no flatboats hereabouts," remarked Master Pettibone.

"You don't suppose I'd keep them on the river, do you, at the mercy of the tide or any meddlesome hand? Nay, they are safe within the cove a quarter of a mile above here. They'll not come out till I have them taken out."

"Father," exclaimed Betty, and somewhat sharply, "Master Pettibone cannot be so much interested in your business that you should tell him all this."

"Who says I am not interested in his business, young Mistress Impertinence?" asked Master Pettibone, turning suddenly upon her.

"I say so, and I know you are not," replied Betty steadily.

Her spirit was rising, her indignation was already aroused. Master Pettibone was stepping toward dangerous ground.

"I mean you are not interested in the sense of a friend," continued Betty bravely.

She had risen now and stood before Master Pettibone. How tall and straight she looked! as lithe and supple, too, as a young ash. The breeze stealing in through the window blew the soft locks of hair about her temples. Her head was erect, her cheeks flushed, her eyes shining.

Her father spoke to her, but she did not heed. She was conscious now only of the man before her and of the cruel persistency with which he had sought to ruin her father.

"You are not a friend, and you know it," continued Betty. "You dislike my father, and you have sought in every way you could to harm him."

"Elizabeth!" spoke Mr. Blew.

Betty heard the voice, but it had no power to stop



"YOU ARE NOT A FRIEND, AND YOU KNOW IT." — Page 252.

her now. Obedience, caution, judgment were thrown to the winds. Conscious only of the right, the justice of her position, Betty, with youth's utter disregard of consequences, faced her father's enemy. Her heart was burning with indignation against the man who had sought in so underhanded a way to injure her father, and who had come now, she was confident, to worm information out of him for some mean purpose. He should discover that his wickedness was known to her, at least.

"You have come pretending to be a friend to my father," continued Betty, "and you have assumed this guise seeking to get information from him, for what purpose I do not know. But this I do know: you have already been at work among the Indians to injure him. You have taken such steps as no one calling himself honorable would care to take."

Master Pettibone sprang to his feet.

"What are you saying, young spitfire? Whence comes such audacity? I wonder you do not tremble at the mere thought of who it is to whom you are speaking. But you will tremble yet, or I'm no prophet. Beware how you speak such words without the proof to back them up."

"I have the proof," said Betty steadily.

She had gotten to that point now where naught could stop her. Her father tried again, but he might as well have sought to stem the swirling current of the Ashley.

"Not many days ago," continued Betty, her sweet, defiant young voice ringing out clear, steady, determined, "you were in the hall of my Uncle Gabriel May's home. You were smoking a pipe, a strange and curious pipe. You remarked that 'twould be a mighty favor indeed that could get it from you. Barely two weeks ago, I saw the same pipe in the possession of old Walkulla. That it had become his own property there could be no doubt. His manner spoke that plainly.

"'Twas Walkulla, you will recall, father, who, without any apparent cause, turned so suddenly against you, and carried his wares to Charles Town, encouraging his people to do the same. The day he passed, father, and you hailed him, standing as one dumb with astonishment when he paid no heed, there was one on the bank above you who laughed with wicked enjoyment. 'Twas Master Pettibone. You did not hear him, yet I did, and the laugh was one of satisfaction, as though he who laughed had seen that come to pass which he ardently desired."

Master Pettibone's face was white with wrath. Two

or three times he had shaken a clenched fist toward Betty. He had called to Mr. Blew to stop her. That, however, seemed beyond Mr. Blew at present. He sat without the power of words, aghast at Betty's disclosure.

"You need a curb on your tongue, my young hussy," said Master Pettibone, his voice quivering with rage, "and you'll get it there quick enough, let me tell you; and in a way, too, you least expect. There'll be a disclosure shortly that will take the stiffness out of you, or I'm no prophet. You'll be glad enough then to be civil to Jonas Pettibone, yea, if you do not even cringe to him, then things will go mightily astray, from what I am expecting."

"I cringe to no one, Master Pettibone," said Betty proudly.

He paid no heed to her, his business now was all with Mr. Blew.

"That lass of yours needs a strait-jacket," he said crisply. "If you don't punish her for this, then you are not the man I take you to be. She has made assertions that she must *prove*, else will I call *you* to account for them."

He paused, as though weighing well his next words. Then, as he advanced nearer to Mr. Blew, and placed

upon the desk a hand trembling with the force of the passion he sought to curb, he continued:

"Now I will say what I was coming to had not this young hussy interrupted me. You may think that because the business of the warehouse is picking up again all is going well for you. It is not, let me assure you. The Government is not at all pleased by the large trade in dried meat you are conducting for yourself."

"You are laboring under some mistake," responded Mr. Blew quickly. He had found his voice now. "The trade in dried meat is no longer an individual enterprise. It was placed under the control of the Government nearly two months ago. In that, as well as the matter of pelts, I am merely the agent. I get my percentage, 'tis true, but——"

"Are you speaking the truth?" interrupted Master Pettibone. He looked aghast at the revelation. "'Tis passing strange I have not heard of *this* before, and with the visits, too, I have recently paid to Charles Town."

"If you doubt my word you can apply to the Governor," said Mr. Blew with dignity.

"It takes one who is untruthful to question the truth of another," declared Betty spiritedly.

"Hold your tongue!" cried Master Pettibone. His

eyes were blazing now. He looked as though he were going to strike her.

"Lass, lass," plead her father, "you must restrain yourself."

"She had better, if she knows what is good for her!" said Master Pettibone. "I won't take any more from you, let me tell you, my young jade. Therefore, if you are wise, you'll bridle that tongue of yours. What I have further to say is with your father.

"It has pleased this marplot of yours, Philip Blew, to declare me an enemy. Very well, let it be thus. You have held your head above others in this colony, and your high-and-mighty ways have been far from pleasing, let me say to you. Neither has there been relish for the grasping manner in which you have sought to grow rich. Well, you've had your day, and you can make the most of it. You no doubt feel very complacent over what you have accomplished, but I for one would not care to have even the wealth you have acquired, with men's tongues saying all manner of evil things with reference to the way I had gained it. There's that receipt, you know. It seems strange it should have been lost—the receipt for the quarter's business that you claim ran the lowest in years. Better find that receipt if you want honest men to believe in

you again. The turning over of the meat trade to the Government was no doubt a sop to keep things quiet. The Governor is by no means convinced, let me say to you, and there will be that happening soon which will bring down that high head of yours, or I have missed my calculations. This is all I have to say to you at this time, so I bid you good-day."

With these words Master Pettibone turned and walked out of the office, and they heard him stumbling through the narrow passage leading to the warehouse.

"Oh, father," cried Betty, as she sprang to his side and threw her arms about him, "'twas a burning shame to talk to you so! I had just to bite and bite my tongue to keep it still."

"It was wiser that you did, lass. I fear, my Betty, in your indignation at what you have discovered, you went much farther than was prudent."

"I just could not help it, father. I have known for some time that Master Pettibone was your enemy; that he was doing all he could injure you, and doing it in a low and underhand way. When he began, as he did to-day, I was just compelled to let him know that I had found him out for what he is."

"But, my lass, he may ruin us now. Indeed, his words had such a threat."

“How can he, father? Is not your standing far superior to that of Master Pettibone? Have you not many influential friends? With these to speak for you, how can the Governor be against you? Nay, cheer up, dear father. We have but driven Master Pettibone from his cover. Instead of a secret enemy he is now an open one.”

“But an enemy at bay, my child. He has gone away very, very angry.”

“In an anger that shows guilt.” Betty paused. “Father,” she said after a moment in which she seemed plunged in deep thought.

“Well, lass?”

“Of two things I have become fully convinced within the last ten minutes. I was partly assured before, but now I am certain.”

“What are those matters with reference to which you are so fully assured, my lass?”

“Well, first and foremost, father, Jean Ignace did not set fire to your office; and, next, Master Pettibone has the receipt we would give so much to possess.”

Mr. Blew started.

“Betty, Betty, mind how you speak, my dear.”

“I am speaking for your ears alone now, father; but if the pinch comes, I would not mind telling Master

Pettibone so himself. I am convinced now that he has it. He took it from your hand that day at the church while you held it in that half-abstracted way. Some day you will find that I am right, father, for Master Pettibone cannot go on always in his meanness without discovery. Sooner or later he will betray himself. The Good Book says, 'there is nothing hid which shall not be manifested,' and I believe that, father, with all my heart."

CHAPTER XVII

ANOTHER BLOW

THE old Indian, San-u-tus-kee, grew steadily better all the while. It was now more than two weeks since he had been found at the bottom of the ditch in such a helpless condition. His fever had almost entirely disappeared and his ankle improved to the extent that he did not now limp at all. He had begun to walk about the yard and to sit in the garden by the sundial, though his favorite nook seemed still to be the warm corner of the kitchen fireplace.

The flowers were a great delight to him, and the sundial held a fascination that his intent gaze plainly declared, but most of all, as was very evident, he liked to sit in the kitchen and watch Mrs. Blew and Betty at work. For Caroline, too, he had a sincere liking, but he never regarded her with the rapt attention bestowed upon Betty and her mother, especially upon Betty. These two had attended him all through his illness, and it was their kindly hands that still supplied his wants.

Charles could scarcely conceal his impatience with San-u-tus-kee; his suspicion, too, of the Indian had deepened.

"Why is he lingering?" Charles asked over and over again, and usually of Betty, as he was doing this morning. "Why does he not return to his home and his people?"

"I think he is not yet strong enough," replied Betty.

Her kind heart felt deeply for San-u-tus-kee.

"I am sure he is fully able now," declared Charles. "I've seen him lately walking about the garden as straight and active as ever he could, I'm certain. He has even been out into other parts of the village, though I fear me 'twas not at all wise on our part to permit this."

"But his home is a long distance, you remember he told us, Charles," Betty replied, and paying no heed to her brother's intimation of their lack of wisdom in permitting the Indian to roam at will about the village. Betty had no distrust of San-u-tus-kee now.

"I think I can tell one reason why he is lingering," continued Charles. "He's never had such food before in all his days as you and Beautiful are giving him, and he just can't get enough of it. 'Tis a sight to see him

stuff and stuff, like an anaconda, for all the world. 'Twould not surprise me any time to behold him bursting with the amount of it."

"Oh, Charles, don't begrudge the poor old creature what he eats, when we have such an abundance of food. While he was very sick he scarcely ate anything at all."

"Well, he is certainly making up for the time lost, and at a double pace."

"Charles, for shame! 'Tis so unlike you to speak in this way. I can see that you do not like San-u-tus-kee at all; that you have been restless ever since he has been here, and you have hinted all kinds of things with reference to him."

"I am restless," admitted Charles. "To tell you the truth, Betty, that old Indian gives me a feeling of the greatest uneasiness. I can't fully define it, but it is there all the same. I do believe he is going to do us much mischief and at no distant time. I just can't get over the feeling."

"Oh, Charles, I am sure it is an unjust feeling. He seems such a harmless old creature, and he is so grateful for what we have done for him."

That evening as Betty and her mother were preparing supper, with old San-u-tus-kee as usual warming

himself in the chimney corner, Mr. Blew came in with the brightest face they had seen him wear in may a day.

“Good news, Dorinda,” he said. “Good news, Betty! The last bale of skins needed to fill the Governor’s special order is safe within the warehouse, and day after to-morrow morning the flatboats will start down the river with such fine cargoes as they haven’t borne in many months.”

His wife smiled her pleasure.

“That is indeed good news, Philip,” she said. “You have worked hard toward accomplishing that, I know, dear husband, and I do rejoice with you that at last you see your work so near its completion.”

Betty ran to him and threw her arms about him, exclaiming :

“Oh, father, I am glad, so glad! yea, gladder than I have words to tell you. I know what it means to you, and I could just shout with the joy of it.”

“Let us wait for that, Betty,” her father said with a smile, “till the bales are safe aboard the *Merry Queen*. There’s sometimes a slip, you know, even when the cup is almost to the lip.”

“Oh, but father, there surely couldn’t be a slip in this case. The skins are ready, and there is the kind,

good river waiting to take them down to Charles Town. What more could be lacking?"

"Well, it does seem, lass, that all things are in our favor, and that the cargo of skins will find safe port at Charles Town, and on time, too, which is really the most important part, after all."

His smile deepened as he turned away to attend to some little matters before supper time.

"Oh, mother, it would hurt father dreadfully," said Betty, as she returned to her place beside the fire, "did anything happen to keep the skins from reaching Charles Town in time for the *Merry Queen* to take them to London as Governor Johnson has planned."

"That it would, dear heart. I have never known him to work harder for anything before, nor to set his heart so earnestly upon an undertaking. Yes, indeed, my Betty, should anything go wrong about the skins now, 'twould be a terrible blow to your father; a terrible blow to us all, in fact. Your father has had so much to bear of late. This would well-nigh crush him."

"I know, mother, and I do pray fervently that all may go well."

Betty had talked to her mother two or three times of late about Master Pettibone. She had been unable

longer to keep from Mrs. Blew part, at least, of Master Pettibone's underhand persecution of her father. But Mrs. Blew had suspected Master Pettibone long ago, for that mean spirit had shown no more wisdom than to bombard the good wife's ears with a low attack upon her husband. On this occasion Mrs. Blew had all but ordered him off the place, which had not only angered him, but deepened his hatred.

Mrs. Blew knew now of the gift of the pipe to Wal-kulla, as she also knew of Edward's visit to Ne-pis-saw-nee, and of the noble aid the Cacique had rendered.

One thing, however, Betty kept from her mother, and that was the insinuations cast and the threats made by Master Pettibone during his last visit to the warehouse. Mrs. Blew knew he had been there, and that he had greatly irritated both Betty and her father by his insolence, but the real animus of the visit had not been disclosed to her.

"Poor mother is worried enough already over father's affairs," was Betty's inward thought. "There would be no good in telling her this."

Thus it did not need her father's injunction, "not to tell mother the worst of this," to put a seal upon Betty's lips.

While the supper was in preparation, Mrs. Blew and Betty talked a great deal of affairs at the warehouse, and spoke again and again of this consignment of skins—a special order of the Governor—and how much it meant, not only to Mr. Blew, but to them all, that the skins reach Charles Town at the appointed time.

While they talked, old San-u-tus-kee seemed intently listening; or it might have been that most of his interest was centered upon the savory supper they were preparing. Had Charles been there, I am sure he would have said such was the case. San-u-tus-kee's eyes took constant note of the movements of mother and daughter. Now and then he asked a question. Occasionally, he ventured a remark. Each time it was one touching upon some interest of Mrs. Blew or of Betty. What was of interest to them seemed to be of interest to him. There was no question as to his gratitude, toward these two at least. His eyes, his voice when speaking to them, showed this plainly. San-u-tus-kee might intend harm to others, as Charles declared, but he surely could do these two no hurt.

Very early after breakfast on the following morning, which was that of the 14th of December, Mr. Blew, accompanied by Edward and Chi-co-la, departed for

the cove within which the flatboats had been safely anchored awaiting the important trip to Charles Town. Within three hours the little party returned. That something most unusual had happened was evidenced by the countenances of both Mr. Blew and Edward as soon as they entered the kitchen where Mrs. Blew and Betty were busy with some affairs. Indeed, Mr. Blew seemed near to fainting as he sat hastily down upon a bench. Edward drew toward him. His face was almost ghastly in its pallor, his hands trembling.

"Philip, Philip," exclaimed Mrs. Blew, "what is the matter?"

"Oh, father," cried Betty, as she sank on her knees beside him and took one of his hands in hers, "what has happened? Do tell us quickly, dear?"

"Are you sick, Philip?" Mrs. Blew asked in shaking tones.

She was standing beside him and had drawn his head against her, stroking it with her palm.

"Nay, not sick, Dorinda. Worry not so, dear heart."

"Then what *is* the matter?"

"Tell them," he said in husky tones to Edward.

The young man's face was almost as pale as his father's. He hesitated a moment.

“ Oh, Edward, what is it? ” entreated Betty. “ This suspense is heart-breaking.”

“ When we went to the cove,” began Edward, finding his voice at last, “ we were sure something had happened ere we made our startling discovery. The bushes were trampled down as though two or three people had recently been there, and we saw a piece of rope dangling from one of the cypress stakes.”

“ Oh, Edward, you don’t mean to say——”

Betty could get no further than this, but her brother understood her.

“ Yes, sister, both flatboats were gone! and it was not that they had broken from their moorings and drifted, as we thought at first—they had been taken away, and——”

“ Oh, father, can this be true? Have you not made a mistake? Are not the boats caught somewhere along the river? ”

“ Nay, lass, we have searched every spot within five miles, and other searchers have now gone on further down the river. But I have no hope,” he added in despairing voice. “ The boats have certainly been taken away. Had they broken loose, which was well-nigh impossible, and drifted, there are two or three places within two to three miles of the fort where they would

assuredly have been caught and held, owing to the peculiar flow of the current."

Betty sprang to her feet.

"Then I know who——"

"Nay, lass," her father said somewhat sharply, "name no names; not now at least," and he glanced warningly toward old San-u-tus-kee, apparently dozing in the chimney corner.

"Father!"

Betty leaned nearer, compelling him to look at her.

"Father, I feared it that day in the warehouse. Oh, how I wanted to keep you from answering his questions! I could see he had no good purpose in view, worming things out of you so."

"Philip, do *you* suspect this man?" Mrs. Blew asked, her voice tremulous. "Could he have been so mean, think you? Oh, my poor, dear husband, what have you done that he should pursue you with such determination to accomplish your downfall?"

She was weeping softly now, her tears falling upon his hair.

"Let us not discuss this part of it now, dear," he said, and his voice had a steadier ring. "'Twill do no good, and may do harm, for before we know it, our

tongues may speak a name. 'Twere better now that they kept silent, I am sure."

"But what will you do, Philip? How are the skins to be carried to Charles Town?"

His head went down again. She had touched the vital point. More than aught else, he was thinking of this very thing.

"I have asked father if he could not get together a sufficiency of Indian canoes," said Edward, "but he is afraid to risk these. Some of the Indians are very poor boatmen and their canoes but frail things, ready to upset at any bit of carelessness. Should the bales go into the river that would be a worse predicament than the present one."

"Perhaps the flatboats may yet be found, and in time," suggested Mrs. Blew. Her kind, gentle heart could not really conceive of a deed so dastardly as this, even by the man she knew as her husband's pitiless enemy.

"Nay, Dorinda, that will not be. They have either been destroyed, or they have been carried to where they could drift out to sea."

"When do you think it happened?" Mrs. Blew asked again.

"It must have been done under the cover of the

darkness last night. The scows were safe yesterday at noon, for I visited the cove myself."

"There is no time, father, to build other boats?" asked Betty quickly.

"Nay, lass, not craft that would be trustworthy. 'Twould take such seasoned timber as we have not at hand at present, even could our workmen accomplish the task within the space of time, which would be impossible. Oh, that Gabriel May had not taken the *Swallow* for that cruise toward St. Augustine! If he and his good ship were here now, all could be accomplished."

"Yes, if they only were!" Every heart echoed that cry, as every one recognized how vain it was to hope for the aid of the blithe Captain and his staunch craft. No messenger, however swift, could get word to him in time.

"What, then, can be done, father?"

It was Betty who asked the question, her mind dwelling persistently upon that one point: How to get the skins to Charles Town in time for the sailing of the *Merry Queen*. That was indeed the one important question. All other matters were, for the time, of minor importance, even the determination Betty had formed to face Master Pettibone and to tell him in no

uncertain words just what she thought of his last dastardly act. Of course, it was his act. There wasn't a particle of doubt in Betty's mind as to that, nor in the minds of her father, mother, and Edward either, she was sure.

"There is but one thing, lass, that can be done," her father replied, "and done with the degree of safety the matter demands."

"And that, father?"

"To get Indian bearers; those who will take the land trail, and thus subject us to no risk of losing the skins in the river. The skins are put into bales of such weight that one would be an average burden for each carrier. By starting an hour or so before noon tomorrow the train could easily be in Charles Town by sunset. Edward and Chi-co-la could go along to see that all went well."

"Can you not get such bearers, father?"

"Yes, my child, but at a price that will cost me dear."

"Still, father, if 'tis the only way, you will not stand back for the price when so much is at stake?"

"That I will not, you may be sure, my Betty. Too much depends upon it, as you have suggested. Yet I hope to get help from the Cacique, and that his bearers

will not cost me so high as others would. I have sent Chi-co-la to see. If for any reason he should fail with the people of Ne-pis-saw-nee, he is instructed to procure bearers wherever 'tis possible to get them. Oh, he must succeed! The skins must go to Charles Town in time to be billed aboard the *Merry Queen*. Too much depends upon it! Too much!"

He arose now somewhat excitedly and began pacing the floor, muttering to himself as he moved restlessly to and fro. His wife spoke to him; so, too, did Betty. He gave no heed to either. Finally, Edward, at his mother's entreaty, went to him, and by gentle persuasion, succeeded in getting him upstairs to lie down for a while.

All this time old San-u-tus-kee, to every appearance, had been dozing in the chimney corner. Surely the excited tones, the piteous exclamations of Mrs. Blew and Betty had penetrated his slumbers. His eyes had opened once or twice, but seemingly to close as drowsily again. Now, however, as Mr. Blew left the kitchen, led by Edward, and repeating, "The skins must go! They must go at any price!" and Betty and her mother completely overcome by the catastrophe that had overtaken them, fell into each other's arms weeping, San-u-tus-kee aroused himself with such vigor as almost

threw him from his stool into the fire. He regarded them intently. Their weeping evidently disturbed him. After a time, when they had ceased weeping and again approached the fire to complete the preparations of the noonday meal, he asked them several questions.

CHAPTER XVIII

SAN-U-TUS-KEE DISAPPEARS

MR. BLEW's predicament was soon known throughout the village. Friends hastened with expressions of sympathy and with offers of assistance. But all the resources of the village could not have afforded him the aid necessary to the accomplishment of his purpose within the time required.

At sunset the searchers sent to look for the flatboats returned with the intelligence that no trace of them was anywhere to be seen; neither had they found a single person who had laid eyes upon them. They had vanished as completely as though the waters had opened and received them.

The whole village was now talking about the disappearance of the flatboats. It seemed a very strange affair indeed. Had the boats really been taken away? If so, who could have done it?

"The Indians," said many. "But what would *they* want with them?" came the quick inquiry, which no one seemed able to answer with satisfaction. If the

Indians operated the boats upon the river to any advantage, they would be compelled to pass the Dorchester fort. They would hardly be bold enough for that. Then, why would they take the scows if they could make no use of them? This was a puzzling question truly.

It looked like a piece of revenge, some were discerning enough to declare. But had Mr. Blew an enemy? There had been some talk of late that such was the case, but no one could point to anything definite. As to Mr. Blew himself, he gave no sign if such were the case. If it were indeed an enemy's hand that had struck him this blow, the hardest, the most overwhelming of all, he gave no intimation of it. Even to his closest friends he was tongued-tied on the subject. Perhaps he was but awaiting a more auspicious time in which to declare his enemy and bring him to account.

At present, however, to all appearances Mr. Blew's every thought was centered upon the one vital question, how to catch the *Merry Queen* in time with this most important consignment of skins. He showed plainly the desire to give neither time nor speech to the consideration of aught else.

His friends were expending every energy in the

effort to aid Mr. Blew. They had rallied nobly to his support. Various plans were suggested, but each alike fell through, either because of its futility or the element of risk involved. Finally they all agreed with him that the plan of securing Indian bearers to go by the land trail was really the only wise and feasible one in the emergency. Mr. Blew had realized this from the first, and now awaited Chi-co-la's return in feverish anxiety. The strain was telling upon him terribly.

In addition to Chi-co-la others had gone upon a like errand. Several of Mr. Blew's friends had set out for the nearest Indian towns as soon as his conviction with reference to the bearers was made known to them. One by one these messengers began to return, and each with a story of defeat to relate. At one town nearly every man of the village was off on a hunt. At another they had gone to Charles Town with goods to barter for tobacco and the Holland gin they had grown to like too well. At still another they were away on a mission for the Governor and Council. Finally, one messenger came back with the intelligence that he had secured twelve bearers. Twelve bearers! and there were more than three thousand skins to be borne and many of them the skins of large animals!

Yet Chi-co-la had not returned. Mr. Blew was

afraid to think how much he depended upon this mission, how strongly he counted, in fact, upon its successful consummation. Surely the Cacique would not fail him. He had never done so. He must stand by him now in this the hour of his greatest need.

It was some time after the night had closed in ere Chi-co-la appeared in the kitchen where they were awaiting him; each heart beating so with anxiety that words were few. The family supper had been eaten, and now while Mrs. Blew, Caroline, and Betty lingered for some domestic tasks the others kept them company. Their thought of Chi-co-la's coming was other than a selfish one, for care had been taken to set his supper aside, and it was now being kept warm upon the hearth.

Charles had instituted himself its guardian. "I don't put a particle of trust in that old San-u-tus-kee," he confided to Betty. "He's had his own supper. I saw Beautiful give him a bounteous supply; nevertheless, his eye is upon Chi-co-la's food at this moment. The first opportunity he gets, he will put greedy hand upon it, I am sure. But he shall not, if I can prevent it," added Charles with emphasis.

Thereupon he established himself upon a stool in San-u-tus-kee's vicinity. The old Indian, as usual, was basking in the glow of the fire. It was a cold

night. Without there was the tingle of frost in the air, and all were glad enough to draw near to the snapping fire of pine and oak logs.

"Hear it crackle!" cried Charles. "Oh, I feel it in my bones that snow is coming!"

"In which the polar bear is to dance for joy?" asked Anne.

Charles nodded.

For a moment they had forgotten the gloom that prevailed about them and the anxious fear that filled their own hearts.

At that moment Chi-co-la entered, and one glance at his face told even the younger ones that his mission had been fruitless. He was foot-sore and exhausted, but he would touch neither food nor drink till he had related to Mr. Blew the full story of his effort and failure. He had been to other villages besides those of the Kiawhas. As it was the hunting season the men in most of the towns were away. Others refused to come at any price. As to the Cacique, he was beyond giving them aid in this emergency, since the Cacique was not to be reached. He had gone on a long contemplated visit to his brother chief, the great Cacique of Cape Fear, and would not return until another moon. He had taken a retinue of his chief men with him.

Those left behind would not leave the women of the village devoid of their protection.

Mr. Blew groaned in voice as well as spirit.

"All is lost!" he said despairingly. "There is no help for me now!"

"Oh, father, cheer up," entreated Betty. "There surely can be some way found."

"What way, daughter?" he asked, glancing at her with sudden eagerness as of one ready to grasp at even a straw that promised help.

For once resourceful Betty was without a reply. She had spoken out of the fullness of her heart, with the desire to cheer her father. Now she saw how hopeless was the case.

The only ray of light to tinge the dark edge of the cloud was in the shape of a communication received by Mr. Blew, even as they sat discussing Chi-co-la's fruitless effort. This communication was to the effect that the *Merry Queen* would be delayed one day in her sailing, or nearly a day. She would leave port at noon of the 17th, instead of the afternoon of the 16th.

"Oh, father, now that you have a little more time, something may be done!" cried Betty eagerly.

"There are other Indian towns, father," said Charles; "further away, 'tis true, but a messenger,

traveling swiftly, might reach them and bring aid in time. Oh, do let me go, sir. I may succeed. There's not a pony in the settlement faster than my Hector."

"'Tis useless, Charles," his father replied in hopeless tones. "I see now how foolish I was to consider such a plan. The Indians have no taste for such work. If it were squaws now—well, I might have succeeded, if only I had had the time for that delicate task," and he smiled feebly.

"You may get some of them even yet," Mrs. Blew spoke quickly. "Do try, Philip."

"'Tis useless, my dear, with their lords and masters away. They would not dare go without their consent."

"Perhaps by sending in every direction you may get bearers enough to carry a portion anyhow of the skins. Do try, father," plead Caroline.

"That would do little good," he replied in indifferent tones. He seemed to be losing all interest now. "To send merely a portion would be almost as bad as to send none at all. 'Tis the whole consignment that is wanted, and none less."

He arose while he was speaking.

"This is the last blow," he said wearily. "My enemy planned well. I shall be almost as bitterly blamed for the losing of the scows as for the failure to

get the consignment of skins in on time. Well, each is alike beyond my power to remedy now."

He spoke in the listless voice of one who has utterly lost hope. His troubles, too, had deprived him of his usual caution. He had proclaimed before his family the fact that he recognized the hand of an enemy. He went slowly up the stairs, his wife beside him. She returned after a while with the information that she had prevailed upon him to lie down, and that he appeared to be sleeping.

In the meantime, Mrs. Joan May had arrived. She had come to share their trouble, and to give them what comfort she could. She had just learned of Chi-co-la's unsuccessful mission through Charles, who had gone to summon her. If ever they needed Aunt Joan's comforting presence, it was at that moment, the lad felt assured.

"Oh, if Gabriel and the *Swallow* were but here!" exclaimed Aunt Joan, but echoing the wish that other lips had so fervently expressed. "If he had had the least inkling he would be needed like this, I am sure he would never have budged a step, though it was the Governor himself pushing him to the cruise. It seems to me that with all the ships and ships' masters at Charles Town, other craft and other commander could

have been found to send on the mission of nosing out just how matters stood around St. Augustine."

"But there is no one who would have done it so well as Uncle Gabriel, and this the Governor knew," declared Betty.

The wife's face flushed with pleasure. The praise was sweet, though it was Uncle Gabriel's own admiring niece who uttered it.

"Oh, if Uncle Gabriel were only here," added Betty, "then this trouble would be no trouble at all."

So each one believed; but alas! it would be a week or more ere Uncle Gabriel returned.

Aunt Joan was full of suggestions. She had a quick brain as well as a loving heart. Her presence was indeed a comfort, but the plans she advanced were those that had already been discussed, or attempted and found futile.

"I am so sorry, dear," Anne had said again and again, as she gave Betty a kiss or a warm pressure of hand or arm. "Oh, it is dreadful! and I do wish I could help."

Dear Anne! she was helping more than she knew by the love so generously bestowed, and by the ready tact with which she did and said the right thing at the right moment.

After a time all had gone away from the kitchen save Mrs. Blew and Betty. They had lingered for some final tasks.

San-u-tus-kee still sat in the chimney corner. He seemed very wide awake now. They wondered why he did not go to his couch in the little lean-to, as it was called. They were sure it was not because he was afraid of being cold, for they had provided him with a generous amount of covering.

San-u-tus-kee was not only very wide awake, but he gave evidence of desiring to talk. He wanted to ask questions, and did ask them. Both Mrs. Blew and Betty were surprised at his loquacity. They had never known him to talk so much within so short a space before.

They were surprised, too, to hear him express himself so well. He used fewer signs, and ere his talkative mood had come to an end he had given them the astonishing piece of information that a white man, captured by his tribe six years before, had lived among them and taught him English. San-u-tus-kee's gratitude had become so great that at the end of the time he had set the captive free, returning him safely to Charles Town.

In the morning even the sore trouble concerning the

loss of the flatboats was for a time forgotten in the excitement of a discovery that was made.

San-u-tus-kee had disappeared. He had gone off during the night, for his bed, carefully spread up during the afternoon, had not been occupied since.

"The old rogue! he might have taken daylight for his departure," declared Charles. "Well, I have said from the first he wouldn't do, and this proves it. If he had had a good intent, think you he would have stolen off in this fashion?"

"But the spirit may have moved him just at that time, Charles," said his mother. "I have seen enough of the Indians to know that they are largely the creatures of impulse."

"Oh, that is your kind way of putting it, mother, but I am sure it does not come anywhere near to the truth in this case. Old San-u-tus-kee slipped away as he did for fear that we would question him, if we saw him ready to depart."

"Why, what questions could we have put to him, Charles, any more than we have already done, and be polite?" asked Betty. "Nay, dear, you are too hard on the poor old Indian, and have been from the first."

"Because from the first I have distrusted him," declared Charles frankly. "I distrust him more than

ever now," he added emphatically, "since he has stolen off in this fashion. Truth to tell, I don't know what moment, he will return, bringing mischief to us."

"Why, what mischief could he bring, Charles?" his mother asked quickly.

Charles did not wish to really alarm his mother, but he felt obliged to say:

"San-u-tus-kee is a Kussoe, mother. I am sure of this, for Chi-co-la could not be mistaken. The Kussoes, as you have no doubt heard, have never been friendly toward the Dorchester colonists. Recall you not, too, how the early settlers of Charles Town suffered from them? They have no friendly feeling toward the white race, I am sure."

"Oh, the Kussoes have held themselves aloof from us," said Betty, "but I believe this is all there is in it, at least for our people. They are Indians of a somewhat morose and reserved temperament, I have heard. I can't believe they really have any evil intent toward us."

"The mere fact that they have held themselves aloof from us," continued Charles, "shows that they are not friendly. Furthermore, all the advances made by our people have been rejected. In vain has father sought to bring them into trading relations, and Uncle

Gabriel met with a direct repulse when he went to their chief village, hoping to gain the right of way through their territory for the Indian tribes beyond them who wanted to come in overland and to trade at our post."

"But the Kussoes did not hurt Uncle Gabriel, remember, Charles, though he was almost alone; and their excuse for not granting his request was that their chief was away."

"Well, they never sent the commission, for which he asked, to confer with him!" replied Charles in some triumph. "Neither did their chief ever dispatch message of any description, while to this day there's no open highway through Kussoe territory for those Indians beyond who come to Dorchester to trade."

"The Kussoes are no doubt suspicious of us," said Betty. "Well, we must send and let them know that we are friends."

Charles laughed.

"That is so like you, Bess," he said. "Perhaps you will go yourself to tell them."

"I shouldn't mind," declared Betty; "though I think San-u-tus-kee will tell them," she added. She just could not share Charles' suspicion of San-u-tus-kee.

"He is more likely to bring them here as enemies,"

asserted Charles. Then, as he noted that his mother had turned away, he added for Betty's ear alone, "I haven't told you anything like the worst yet about the Kussoes. They are the very tribe the Spaniards have been working on lately, and the very ones the Dons declare will the more quickly get up the courage to attack us. Indeed, Bess, and now I am sure you will consider this very grave, agents of Spain were seen only last week in the chief Kussoe town. Chi-co-la had this information from two Indians he knows well."

Then indeed did Betty's heart begin to beat with stroke so fast it almost took her breath away.

But no, she would not believe it! San-u-tus-kee could not, he would not be so wickedly ungrateful.

CHAPTER XIX

THE *Merry Queen* GETS HER CARGO

THE sixteenth of December dawned cold, but clear. It was a bracing cold that sent the blood coursing through the veins with a fresh tingle of life.

As was its custom, the Dorchester colony was astir at daybreak. By sunrise the thrifty housewives had the morning meal ready for eating. In some households it was eaten by candlelight.

In the Blew household on that morning the meal was eaten almost in silence. Every heart felt too sad for speech. Now and then an anxious glance was cast toward Mr. Blew. He was bearing up better than his family had dared to hope. He made some pretense at eating, and once or twice there was an effort to smile, though it was a wan smile more piteous even than tears would have been. His face still wore its harassed expression, and no doubt his present composure was due to the state of utter helplessness into which he had settled.

He went early to the warehouse, and Betty was not

long in following him. She felt that she must not lose sight of him this day. If ever he needed the cheer of her presence, it was now.

She found him sitting at his desk, his body bent forward, his head in his hands, utter dejection apparent in his whole attitude.

"Father," said Betty briskly, "let us try to get some of the pelts to Charles Town. The twelve bearers secured by Chi-co-la are waiting, and fifteen more of the young men of the village have volunteered. These, with Edward and Charles and Chi-co-la, will make quite thirty bearers, father. Oh, do assemble them, give each his burden and let them depart."

"'Twill do no good, Betty," Mr. Blew replied wearily. "I should only be laughed at for my pains. What! send but a pittance of the magnificent cargo I have collected? Why, it would be quite as bad as not to send any at all. What would the Governor do with a remnant like that?"

"It would be better than none at all, father. I am sure Governor Johnson himself will think so. Oh, pray, father, do as I beg."

"'Tis useless, Betty. Censure will be mine whether I send a portion of the skins or not. There is the loss of the flatboats, the source of all the trouble. Had

the flatboats been carefully guarded, as past experience should have warned me ought to have been done, then would all be well at present."

"But, father, how were you to know that your enemy, even as relentless as he has shown himself, could be guilty of a deed so dastardly as this? Though I must confess, for my own part, I have had an uneasy feeling ever since he questioned you so, father."

"I should have anticipated it, Betty," Mr. Blew replied. "The blows heretofore struck me were of such a nature that I ought to have expected this one. A guard should have been placed at the cove. The prior course of this man ought to have made me see clearly that he was capable of this last step."

Betty was surprised to hear these words from her father. He was speaking more plainly now with reference to the subject of Master Pettibone's persecution than Betty had ever heard him. His forbearance was no doubt exhausted. Perhaps he also clearly saw that matters had come to an open issue.

Betty was about to reply, when just at that juncture Edward and Charles, followed by Chi-co-la, entered the office. Edward and Charles had come to add their entreaties to Betty's that their father dispatch as many skins as he could by the bearers at hand.

"'Twill be better than sending none at all, sir," suggested Charles politely. "The Governor will be a little more pleased, I am sure, than if no skins at all are received."

"You have thirty bearers at hand, father," said Edward, "and I think, nay, I am sure, I can secure two more. Do say the word, father, and let me go gather the bearers."

"Nay," replied Mr. Blew, "'twill be but a handful of carriers at best. Such meager response on my part will make men smile. What think you the captain of the *Merry Queen* will say to receive such remnant, a mere pretense of the royal cargo he expects, and for which he has prepared? Will not his words as well as his face express his amusement and contempt?"

"Nay, nay!" continued Mr. Blew, and now speaking in more excited tones, "let me face it as it is. The blow has fallen. I am powerless. Whatever the consequences, there is naught now that can stay them. But oh, 'tis hard! hard! that after a course of rectitude, during which I have neither injured man nor done aught I desired to conceal from God's eye, such accusations should now confront me. Conditions are such that to all appearances I have not only been capable of

transactions that would call the blush of shame to any honest man's cheek, but I have besides proven careless, wholly unfit for the responsible position I occupy. What is now before me save to succumb, to own myself crushed, defeated?"

He was still pacing the floor restlessly, and Betty was seeking to soothe him, when suddenly there came a sharp cry from Charles.

"Look yonder! Indians, as I live! A whole company of them. Of course, it is an attack. But how bold of them! Fly, Chi-co-la, to warn the village, while I speed home to help the loved ones there! Father, Betty, do hasten to the fort! Oh, I know 'tis that old San-u-tus-kee! I have expected it!"

"Stay!" it was Chi-co-la who spoke the word, as he placed detaining hand upon Charles. "See you not 'tis a band of friendly Indians? Already the emblem of peace has been shown to the guards, and they are entering the village. See you not, too, that they are unarmed? But 'tis San-u-tus-kee!" he added in tones of surprise.

"San-u-tus-kee!" echoed Charles. "I knew it. The guards are surely out of their minds to let him in and with all those Indians. Let me go, Chi-co-la, I must warn the village. San-u-tus-kee means naught

but mischief, I am sure. Father, will you not speak to Chi-co-la? Why is he detaining me so? See you not the danger? 'Tis that old villain, San-u-tus-kee. He has returned, and with him a band of Indians, as I was sure he would do. He is bent on mischief. Oh, let me go before it is too late. I must arouse them at the fort."

By this time Betty and Mr. Blew were also beside the window.

"San-u-tus-kee!" cried Betty in excited tones. "Are you sure, Charles?"

It was Edward who replied.

"'Tis San-u-tus-kee, true enough. But hold! Charles, I am sure he means no mischief. The Indians have come with some good intent. See you not the smiles on the faces of those who have gathered about them and are following them hither? For if mine eyes do not deceive me truly they are coming toward the warehouse!"

"They are Kussoes and Westoes," said Chi-co-la.

"Kussoes!" exclaimed Mr. Blew; "then they have no doubt come for the conference with Gabriel. A pity he is not here; but then those are here who can make whatever treaty is agreeable to both sides."

"Is that really San-u-tus-kee?" asked Charles, as

the Indians approached, while the little group within the warehouse awaited their coming with much curiosity. "Why, in what fine rig he is! and he seems to have command of all the others."

"'Tis the dress of the chief," said Chi-co-la, whereupon a look of deep surprise came into other faces besides his own.

By this time the Indians had reached the warehouse, and the little company within hastened to the steps to meet them.

"They have made a mistake," said Mr. Blew. "They should go to the space in front of the fort, where all conferences are held."

"Perhaps their business is with you, father," replied Betty. "They may have come to promise you their trade."

There was a little tremor in Betty's tones, and her eyes were shining. Truth to tell, something very strange had begun to stir at Betty's heart. It had been there ever since she had noted San-u-tus-kee in such fine array at the head of the Indians and evidently with such authority.

San-u-tus-kee's eyes were seeking some one. They grew bright as soon as their gaze fell upon Betty. He advanced, and, placing his hand upon his breast, began

speaking to her. He used gestures as well as words, and whenever he failed to make his meaning clear, Chi-co-la supplied it.

What San-u-tus-kee said in plain language was this: "Fawn with the beaming eyes and soft step, child of the White Doe with the soothing touch, when calamity befell San-u-tus-kee then your hand rescued him. He was carried to a soft couch, to gentle ministrations, and later food and warmth and cheering words were given him. Though he lingered, and no doubt his ways were trying, still never was there aught for him save the kindly look and the soft word. While San-u-tus-kee stayed, loath to leave a place where his heart felt at rest as never before, trouble befell one dear to the White Doe and to the Fawn with the beaming eyes. It was trouble for them, too. San-u-tus-kee sat and listened, though his eyes seemed heavy with sleep. When the trouble grew greater and there seemed no aid at hand, then did San-u-tus-kee steal away for the help which he knew was in his power to bring.

"See! two hundred young men of the Kussoes and Westoes, the very pick of San-u-tus-kee's people and of those of Psait-kop-ta. Day and night have they traveled; yet are they as fresh as the morning's breath. Ready are they, nay, eager for the mission which,

when accomplished, will bring joy again to the hearts of those who made San-u-tus-kee feel how sweet a thing kindness could be."

He looked now toward Mr. Blew.

"The bearers are here. Show them where the skins are that must reach Charles Town by the setting of the sun."

Could it be possible? Had rescue really come and in this astonishing way? Yes, there could be no doubt of it. There was San-u-tus-kee, his beaming countenance emphasizing the words he had spoken, and there, too, were the bearers he had brought, waiting for their burdens.

Betty sprang toward the chief. He really was chief. Yes, San-u-tus-kee, the Indian they had rescued in so strange a manner, and for whom they had patiently cared, was really the chief of the long-dreaded Kus-soes. How astonishing it seemed. Almost past belief.

Betty grasped the hand of the chief. Her eyes were misty, her voice tremulous.

"San-u-tus-kee! San-u-tus-kee! Oh, how good you are! Never did I dream you could do aught like this for us. How can we ever repay you for it?"

"No pay!" said San-u-tus-kee firmly, "no pay.

Pay already," he added after a pause. "White Doe and Fawn with Beaming Eye good to San-u-tus-kee. Make bed soft for him. Give cooling drink. Prepare food, such food as San-u-tus-kee love. Always speak kind to San-u-tus-kee. Nay, nay, San-u-tus-kee paid already. No more pay. San-u-tus-kee will not have it. Neither San-u-tus-kee's people!" Nor would they, though Mr. Blew tried again and again to press payment upon them.

It was indeed a goodly sight as the long line of Indian bearers filed away from the warehouse, bearing the precious bales that were to form the valuable cargo of the *Merry Queen*. All the village turned out to see them depart.

Betty looked closely for Master Pettibone. She was wicked enough to desire to enjoy a sight of his scowling countenance as he beheld the triumph of Mr. Blew, despite the overwhelming blow that had been dealt. She learned, however, that Master Pettibone had gone to Charles Town.

"No doubt," Betty said to herself, "he is there so that he may gloat over the sailing of the *Merry Queen* without the Governor's cargo. How much I would give for a look at him when San-u-tus-kee and his Indian bearers appear, and Master Pettibone realizes

that, despite all the wicked things he has done to him, my father has come off victorious."

Mr. Blew did indeed look like one flushed with victory. The change that had come to him was remarkable. His face no longer wore its haggard expression. His cheeks were flushed, his eyes in a glow. His tongue, heretofore so silent, had a word for all. He grasped San-u-tus-kee's hand again and again, pouring out his gratitude. There could be no doubt as to the warmth of it.

Only Charles was tongue-tied. Poor Charles! he was suffering deeply for his conduct toward San-u-tus-kee, for the words of accusation he had spoken.

"To think how I abused him!" said Charles in contrition; "and now instead of sneaking upon us to do us mischief, as I so stoutly affirmed he would, here he is playing benefactor, and after such a fashion as seems almost like a fairy story."

Charles proved his contrition by making advances to the chief which, greatly to the lad's satisfaction, were graciously received.

Hearts were light again in the Blew household, but alas! they were not long to remain so. The first disturbing news was in the shape of a rumor that the Governor would very likely appoint Master Jonas

Pettibone supervisor of Dorchester township to succeed Master Christopher Portman, deceased. In three days more the rumor was confirmed! Betty's heart grew faint as she read it. He would now have supervision of her father's affairs. He must look into Mr. Blew's business and audit his accounts. As bad as was this news, worse was to come. This later intelligence did not reach Betty's ears with the speed it did her father's or Aunt Joan's, Uncle Gabriel's and others; but it came soon enough as it was. It was from her father that she obtained it, but only after his worried expression had sounded a note of alarm in her heart, and caused her to worm this new trouble out of him. It really was no new trouble, but the old trouble intensified. Her father's report, made from memory, of the quarter's business at the warehouse prior to the fire, had not been accepted; or at least, acceptance of it was delayed until he could appear before the Council to answer certain questions concerning it and other matters that had been brought to the Governor's attention. Of what these matters consisted was not definitely stated.

To appear before the Council! He, her own precious father, whose dealings were as clear and straightforward as the shining of the sun, to be brought

before the Council. To answer to certain accusations! Oh, it was dreadful! Betty's heart almost broke with the shame and the sorrow of it.

"It will kill him, poor father, I know it will!" moaned Betty, as she sobbed out her trouble with Aunt Joan's arms about her.

"But, dear heart," asked Aunt Joan, "if he is innocent, how can harm come to him? He will answer their questions clearly, and that will end it."

"Oh, Aunt Joan, you do not know all that there is connected with it," and thereupon Betty began and related to her aunt the full story of Master Pettibone's persecution of her father.

Some of this Aunt Joan had heard before; some, too, she had suspected, but not until Betty fully enlightened her did good Mistress May have anything like a true conception of the extent of Master Pettibone's monstrous wickedness. Even then she was not daunted.

"He is fitter for prison than for any post of honor!" Mrs. May declared of Master Pettibone, her eyes blazing; "and how I hope he will soon get what he deserves. But, Betty, think, dear, your father is innocent. How, then, can he be harmed? 'Tis true unruly tongues are saying things 'tis not pleasant to hear, and

others more evil are voicing accusations this man no doubt put into form. But what will this amount to when your father is cleared?"

While they were talking, Captain Gabriel came into the room. He was at last pushed to the point where he was obliged to admit that the accusations against Mr. Blew had assumed a more serious aspect than Mrs. May surmised.

"The unfortunate part for Philip," he said, "is that, owing to certain conditions—we now know well enough how those conditions came to exist—the business of the warehouse was smaller for that quarter than for any corresponding quarter of the years before. It has now been made to appear—through whose evil work we know full well—that Philip purposely misplaced or destroyed Master Portman's audit of the accounts, because it suited his purpose. The receipts of the Indian trade for that quarter, this evil tongue has declared, were larger than Philip says, many of the Indians having brought pelts cured the winter before, a somewhat unusual occurrence. Of course, the insinuation is that Philip has falsified the accounts to serve his own end: the smaller the trade, the smaller the amount to be turned over to the Government. 'Tis even intimated that he sold quantities of skins

through private sources, thus adding to his own revenues, but defrauding the Government."

"Oh, Uncle Gabriel, I never heard of anything so shameful!" sobbed Betty.

"Shameful it is indeed, lass!" declared the big captain, boiling with indignation, "and to think it is all due to one man's malicious work! How Philip has stood it with such patience and for so long, I cannot conceive. Again and again have I tried to get him to bring matters to an open issue with the wretch seeking in such a cold-blooded way to ruin him. But he never would do it, saying truly enough, until very recently, that there was naught on which he could put his hands. Now things have gotten to the pass where Philip will have hard work indeed to undo the mischief this man has done."

"Oh, Gabriel," cried Mrs. May, "you surely do not think 'tis so bad as that?"

"I fear so, Joan, but Philip has many true friends left, influential ones they are, too. But in the meantime some one must get the ear of the Governor in Philip's behalf; some one with eloquent tongue. I know of none better than this lass here," and Captain Gabriel's eyes rested upon Betty.

"Oh, Uncle Gabriel, what could I do, such a poor

weak lass as I am? Willing enough am I, as you know full well, to do anything in my power to aid my precious father, but what could a lass such as I accomplish by going to the Governor, Uncle Gabriel?"

"You could tell the story of your father's trouble, my Betty, of his persecution by Master Pettibone, as I am sure no other tongue could tell it. The Governor would listen, too, or I am no judge of him. He is a gallant man where womenkind are concerned, though often overbearing and autocratic with those of his own sex. Yes, my Betty, you must go to see the Governor and quickly. 'Tis I who will carry you, and just as soon as the *Swallow* returns from her cruise up the Cooper. This is Saturday. We'll say that you will go next Wednesday."

But when the day came, that had occurred which put the Governor entirely out of their minds.

CHAPTER XX

THE CLOSING OF THE DOOR

THE next day was the Sabbath. It dawned clear and beautiful. Though it was the beginning of January, it was not intensely cold. Intense cold is something rare in this latitude, even in mid-winter.

The Dorchester families started early to church, for the sentiment of the colony was unreservedly against late gathering. All who entered the sacred edifice after the services had begun were considered not only offenders against good breeding, but gross violators of the claims of reverence. They were sure to be frowned upon by their less tardy neighbors, as well as to receive their open rebuke after the dismissal. In some instances, these offenders were fined. Shortly after the services began the doors were closed by the tithing man—he who took up the collection—and no one could either enter or depart. Occasionally one with a very good excuse might pass in or out.

How proud the Dorchester colonists were of their Meeting House! the first of their faith in the Province

of Carolina. Prior to its building, worship had been held in the fort, or under the spreading branches of the oaks.

The majority of the Dorchester colonists rode horseback to church, though there was quite a little company afoot. But whether riding or walking, each man and youth carried his musket; for though seemingly it was a time of peace, there was never any telling when there would be an Indian outbreak. Disturbing rumors had begun to come of late. While the Spanish emissaries had not succeeded with the Kussoes, as was evidenced by the noble conduct of San-u-tus-kee and his people toward Mr. Blew, still it was asserted that they had been more successful with other Indians along the frontier.

It was feared that they would succeed with certain tribes of Apalatchee Indians, who inhabited the territory along the banks of the Altamaha River not far from its mouth. Troubles with these Indians had been for some time anticipated. They had cherished a grudge against the Dorchester colonists from the beginning. What might they not do with the Spaniards to urge them on? As Captain Gabriel had said, the Spaniard was such a wily foe, they kept in readiness for him all the time. It was well they did.

The Apalatchees were a very numerous and warlike tribe, and they had been known to openly declare their regard for the Spaniards. Their chief and headmen were frequently at St. Augustine.

The Blews had no more than reached the church-steps and turned for a few words with a group of their neighbors gathered there, when a messenger came with some disturbing news.

A body of armed horsemen from Charles Town, a detachment of the Governor's own troop, was encamped not more than two miles away; in fact, just beyond the ferry. The troops were on the march to intercept a band of Apalatchee Indians who had crossed the Savannah, and were said to be approaching the Carolina settlements with hostile intent. The same messenger brought a communication for Captain Gabriel May, warning him of the expected trouble and advising that the colonists be on the alert. The messenger further stated that the troop had halted for two or three hours' rest, as well as for the purpose of allowing men and horses to partake of food.

The intelligence brought by the messenger was indeed of the most disturbing nature, though there was also the assurance that no immediate danger threatened. The Indians were yet many miles away, or believed to

be. The Governor's fine troop hoped to rout them completely.

Some were for returning at once to the village and then to the fort, but the majority overruled them. The matter was not so serious as to interrupt the services. Had they not more than once before sat at worship with danger hovering even nearer than it was at present? These godly colonists were strict in their religious observances. They had been brought up in the belief that, however strong other ties might be, that of the church was the strongest. Its claims took precedence of all else. No matter, however important, was allowed to come between them and their church attendance. It was not to be supposed, then, that they would forego the services on this occasion, and Sabbath services, too, because of the new Indian alarm.

"I am indeed thankful," said Master Roddey, "that we were enabled to construct so strong a building. Unless the Indians come in overwhelming numbers, we could make stout defense from within."

The church building did look not unlike a small fortress. The windows of tiny panes of glass, diamond-shaped, were well protected by heavy iron shutters, which could be quickly closed. There were two doors, the main one facing southeast, the other upon

the northeast side of the building. The doors, like the window shutters, were iron-plated. The southeast one could be secured from within by a heavy iron bar. The northeast one, the smaller of the two, swung upon spring hinges, the contrivance of a Dorchester blacksmith, and there was a catch which did its work easily. Thus, with a proper expenditure of force, even a child could swing the door securely shut. It had been thus constructed that it might be closed quickly in case of an Indian attack. Near to this northeast door were the Blew and Roddey pews.

A few families sat together, though it was not the general custom. There was one side of the building for men and another for women, and a number of the worshipers adhered to this rule strictly. The choicest seats were given to elderly people. Boys, who were known not to behave very well, were grouped on the gallery stairs, so that they could be in full view of a large part of the congregation. If one proved so bold as to misbehave under such circumstances, he was promptly rapped on the head by the tithing man. If his conduct had been very trying, he was punished publicly after the services. The gallery was reserved for the negro slaves, and for the Indians who desired to attend the services.

How cold and damp the church was within! for there was no way to warm it. Some of the women and girls had little foot stoves, made of metal, which held live coals. Others used the wolf, and deer-skin bags nailed to the seats. Into these they thrust their feet.

Near the northeast door, as has been stated, the Blew and Roddey families had their pews. These were quaint box-like structures which almost hid their occupants from view when seated. The seats, which ran around three sides, were narrow and uncomfortable. It was very dangerous to go to sleep while sitting on one of them. Some of the seats were set on hinges, and when the occupants of these pews stood up for the psalm or for the long prayers, the seats were turned back. Sometimes, if one did not take great care, quite a clatter ensued when the seats were turned down again. The tithing man kept a close watch for such offenders, and when one was caught there was usually a fine to pay.

The prayers were often an hour or more in length. How tired one grew of standing! The only relief was to lean against the partitions between the pews.

On the Sabbath of which we are writing, Parson Lord had asked that the northeast door be left open. It was almost opposite to the pulpit, with the great

sounding board above and the spiral flight of stairs leading to where the minister stood. As the southeast door had been closed and most of the windows, as a matter of caution, the minister felt obliged to have the light afforded by the opening of the northeast door. But it was not left unguarded. Two men sat near to it, one on either side, and each with his musket across his knees.

Considering the stirring nature of the news that had so recently come to them, there was an unusual amount of drowsiness discernible throughout the congregation of the White Meeting House on this Sabbath. The minister was no more than well started in his sermon ere there were several heads nodding from side to side in the pews. The tithing man must also have been nodding, else would he have been abroad with his rapping cane.

Betty was disturbed as she noted the drowsiness. It not only showed disrespect to the minister, but it was also quite astonishing in view of the somewhat startling news they had received no more than an hour ago. Her own mind was alert, her thoughts coming so swiftly they crowded one upon the other. How could any one sleep at a time like this? After a while, to her dismay, she saw that one of the guards beside the open

door had succumbed to drowsiness. How Betty longed to shake him and to take his gun away from him and to serve as guardian herself. One who could sleep while at a post of trust surely did not deserve to be there.

Betty thought of calling her father's attention to the matter, but he was so closely engaged following the words of the minister she disliked to disturb him. Besides, such an interruption would not be good church manners, Betty recognized full well. She wondered if the other guard would not soon notice the drowsy condition of his comrade and waken him. But, alas! he too, was deeply engaged following the minister.

Betty sat in such position that her face was partly toward the minister and partly toward the open door. Thus, by turning her head from time to time, she had whichever view she desired, that of the minister or of the forest beyond the open door.

Near Betty sat Charles, but he could not see through the open door as well as she could, as a pillar supporting the gallery obstructed his view.

Parson Lord had almost finished his sermon. He was talking to them now with reference to the new peril that had arisen. Earnest were his words, tremulous with emotion his voice, as he entreated them to be

prepared for whatever might come. Danger was nigh, but the arm of the Omnipotent One was mighty to save.

It was at this moment that Betty, for some time deeply intent upon the words of the minister, turned her head toward the door. She could never have told why at that moment of all others, when the minister was talking so earnestly, she chose to look away from him. It was as though some irresistible impulse drew her. Her eyes glanced through the door-way and beyond, toward the silent forest with its stately trees. How beautiful everything was out of doors! She could see the swaying pines, the wide-spreading live oaks with their streamers of gray moss. Tangled here and there were the green vines of the yellow jessamine. How soon now they would be filled with the golden bell-like blossoms! How the sun glowed! How vivid the green of the trees and of the grass newly upspringing here and there. The only somber thing upon which Betty's eyes rested was a strip of the cemetery. There was one tomb larger than the others. It was built of brick, and vines were running riot over it.

For some reason Betty's eyes rested upon this tomb as though it held a fascination for her. Suddenly, as she looked, her heart almost ceased its beating. An

Indian had raised himself from behind the tomb and was creeping toward the door.

Following him came another and another, and not only from this tomb, but from others! Steadily, stealthily the line was moving toward the open door! She knew in a moment that these were Indians on no friendly mission. Betty tried to cry out, to give warning, but for the moment her tongue was as though paralyzed. Oh, would no one else see? Would no one else heed? Then a thought came with the rapidity of the lightning's flash. If she cried out, seeking to warn the guards, would it avail? One was asleep; could he be aroused in time? And might not the other merely look at her in a startled way if she cried to him? Thus precious time would be lost, and ere they could understand her, the Indians would be within the church.

There was clearly but one thing to do. She must close the door as speedily as was in her power. How magnificently now Betty's well-trained muscles served her! With lithe young limbs she sprang up and over the high back of the old box-like pew, clearing with one bound the corner of the pew beside it and landing with the agility of a panther upon the floor, with but her body's length between her and the open doorway.

Almost knocking over the sleeping sentinel, she

grasped the door, throwing all her strength to it. At the same moment her voice rang like a clarion through the church:

“The Indians! The Indians! They are without! See to the open windows as quickly as possible!”

The next instant, with a sharp clang, the great iron-bound door swung to, its strong latch catching true upon the facing.

Not a second too soon, for even as the latch caught, a great body hurled itself heavily against the door, while close upon this came a series of infuriated whoops which plainly told the story to all within. They were attacked by the Indians, and but for Betty's prompt closing of the door they would have been massacred even as they sat listening to the minister.

CHAPTER XXI

A COURIER THAT WAS NOT SENT

CONFUSION now ensued. Women were screaming, children crying, and members of families who were separated calling piteously for each other. But even in the midst of the panic there were many who did not forget the brave girl whose rare presence of mind had served them from a sudden, awful death. They crowded about her, clasping her hand and speaking words of praise.

“’Tis few who can act with such quickness and courage, my child,” the minister said as he laid his hand upon her head.

But there was little time for words. The Indians were now making an assault upon the building, and the men must hasten to the portholes.

Yes, the church was strong, as Master Roddey had remarked with great satisfaction. They had cause for thankfulness in that. But there were conditions that made the matter of the Indian attack very serious indeed. The men and boys who had come to the services on that Sabbath had not with them a large

amount of ammunition. So long as the trusty muskets could speak with deadly effect through the portholes, the Indians could be held at bay. When the musket fire ceased, then the red fiends could have their way with the building. No doubt they would climb to the roof and tear through the tiling, setting the church on fire, or they might secure some implement of warfare heavy enough to batter down a portion of the wall. It seemed, therefore, but a question of time for those brave souls caught like sheep within the church building.

Another matter that gave them deep anxiety was the condition of affairs at the village. Only a small company of men and boys had been left in charge. Should the Indians also attack the village, this small band would have hard work to hold the fort against them. In any event, they would not come to the rescue of those within the church, even if they heard the sound of the muskets and suspected what was happening. It had been agreed that they were not to expose themselves along the open road to give aid, but were to remain and hold the fort at all hazards. Thus, if the churchgoers were attacked and could drive the Indians away, they would still have the protection of the fort to which to retreat.

Meanwhile, several trusty muskets had spoken. Two of the Indians lay dead, three more were wounded, and the remainder had retreated to the cover of the trees as though to gather strength for a renewed attack.

"I believe they are waiting for others to come up," said Master Roddey. "There is no telling how many of the red fiends there may be after a time. Things look serious to me. The whole strip of forest seems filled with Indians.

"Oh, if we could only notify the Governor's troop!" he cried after a moment. "Only two miles away, yet they might as well be twenty for all they will know of our terrible situation. In a half hour they will no doubt be moving on, leaving us to our fate like trapped animals."

"Do you think it possible to get a courier to them?" ventured a voice. "There is yet time."

"Possible, Master Hall, with all these red demons on the watch? Nay, friend, nay! Why, 'twould be as much as a man's life is worth to even put his head without, let alone to attempt the ride. Then think of the consequence if the door were opened! The wretches would be upon us with overwhelming force ere we could close it again. No doubt they were watching for just such opportunity."

The Indians did seem awaiting some favorable moment for an attack. They were doubtless formulating a plan whereby those within the church might be crushed at a single blow, without any great risk to themselves.

As Master Hall asked the question about the courier, Betty was near by. She turned with a quick gesture toward him, but no one noted it. Up to this time she had been surrounded by those who praised her in no stinted terms for the brave deed whereby their lives had been preserved. Their words of gratitude sank into her heart, but when they sought to make a heroine of her, it embarrassed modest Betty. Sweetest of all, however, were the words of commendation from her own loved ones.

Now Betty was glad to note that many turned away from her to listen to those words spoken by Masters Hall and Roddey. It left her to herself for some moments and gave her more time in which to think.

To send a courier to the troop encamped but two miles away! That indeed seemed their only hope of salvation. Yet in the next moment it was dismissed as beyond man's possibility. They even discussed the chances of making a dash from the church, some twenty or thirty of them in a body. While the ma-

majority held the Indians at bay, two or three of the number were to escape and summon the troops. But this plan was also abandoned, not only because of its recklessness, but because of the greater peril in which it would place the women and children. They concluded, however, they would try it as a last resort. Should the Indians set fire to the church, then they would attempt this one desperate means of escape. They could at least die together. Better that than the horrible torture of fire.

“Do you think it would be possible to get a courier to the Governor’s troop?” How that question kept ringing in Betty’s ears! If only warning could be carried, then rescue was at hand! But whatever was accomplished must be done speedily. In a half hour or so it would be too late. Then the troop would be on the march straight away from the church.

The Indians had now sallied forth for another attack upon the building. They were yelling like demons. The good muskets spoke. Almost simultaneously two arrows came speeding through as many openings, and one of the brave gunners fell backward, a crimson flow staining the sleeve of his shirt. One of the arrows had torn through his arm. Children screamed in terror, women moaned and wrung their hands, while the

wife and daughter of the wounded man sank beside him with cries of grief.

Betty covered her ears to shut out the heartrending sounds and moved away. The poor man must be sorely hurt. No doubt his family believed him wounded to the death, to judge by their piteous cries.

As Betty stumbled on, scarcely heeding where she walked, she came suddenly against the door of a little private room used by the minister. The door was ajar. Almost unconsciously Betty pushed it open and entered. No one was within. The minister himself was now kneeling beside the stricken man whose head he supported, while he sought to stanch the wound and to bestow words of comfort upon the sorrowing.

The room was a tiny apartment, not more than six by four feet. There was a bench against the wall opposite the door, a small table and a stool. This was all the furnishing, save a shelf in one corner.

Betty sank upon the bench. Still that question kept ringing through her head, "Would it be possible to send a courier to the Governor's troop?"

A narrow window high up in the wall admitted light to the room. A mad thought seized Betty. Could she reach it and crawl through it? There was an iron plate working upon grooves, which could be slid back

and forth from within. It was now only partly open. Betty climbed upon the table, and pushed the plate back a little more. Her head was now on a level with the open space, and she could see well into the forest beyond. No Indians seemed to be on this side of the church. They were massed about the building on the two sides containing the doors. No doubt they hoped to force one or both of the doors.

Betty's next move was to place the stool on the table and to stand on that, scarcely realizing even yet the rash thing she had it in her mind to do.

She drew the iron plate noiselessly back to the full extent it would go. The opening thus revealed was about two feet long by fifteen inches wide.

"I believe I can crawl through that," thought Betty. "The drop to the ground is not more than ten feet. I will take off all the clothing I can spare, so that I shall not find myself caught hard and fast in the opening."

She looked again through the small window. Then for one moment her heart stood still.

"Oh, if it should be useless after all!" she said to herself. "If the Indians should spring upon me as soon as I reach the ground."

At that instant, as though to give answer to the fear,

there came the sound of fiendish yells from the other side of the church. The Indians were no doubt rushing again upon the building.

Betty drew back shuddering.

"It seems a terrible risk!" she exclaimed. Then her shoulders straightened and her eyes shone. "But I will do it. 'Tis only one life against many, and I may win."

She leaned toward the opening, peering out again and more intently.

On this side of the church several ponies had been hitched. At the wild onslaught of the Indians and the sharp crack of the guns some of the ponies had broken loose from their fastenings and gone galloping madly away; but others yet remained, and among them Hector, Charles' pony. Though he was the fastest pony in the settlement, Hector was, nevertheless, a steady one. He had not lost his head, but he was now neighing uneasily, as much as to ask what all this din could mean.

Betty's plan was to escape through the small window, reach Hector, mount him, and speed away ere the Indians discovered her. She never stopped to think that there might be a band of the Indians in the forest on this side of the church; that even now they were

watching her, anticipating her intention. Her one thought was how to reach the pony without discovery, her one desire to reach the troop in time and bring them to the rescue of the besieged. Even now the soldiers might be moving away. Oh, if she should be too late after all! This thought was like a spur to Betty.

She climbed again upon the stool, caught hold securely to the facing of the window, and then let herself down feet foremost, as swiftly as she could to be careful. As she swung outward, she hesitated no more than an instant ere letting herself drop. As she thus hung downward, the distance to the ground was no more than six feet. Betty was jarred a little, but that was all. She came down upon her knees in the soft earth, but in another instant was on her feet and speeding toward Hector.

The din on the other side of the church had grown less. Now and then a rifle spoke, but it was evident the besieged were using their ammunition sparingly.

Beside a small hickory, his bridle reins thrown somewhat loosely over a low-hanging limb, stood Hector.

Betty had covered half the distance from the church to Hector, when a quick, glad neigh greeted her. The pony had discovered her, and was expressing his joy

at her coming. She had ridden him many times, and there was genuine love between them. Betty put forth greater exertion, her heart beating madly with hope. In a few seconds more she would reach Hector; she would be upon his back. Then away they would go like the wind!

But at that very moment, when hope shone as a bright star before her, there came a loud, prolonged whoop, but a few feet away, then a chorus of similar sounds near at hand that sent the chill of fear like an icy draught through her veins. The Indians had discovered her! They were now running toward her! How many were there? She dared not look. Her one thought was to reach Hector.

The pony seemed to realize the situation. He neighed again and excitedly. It was as though he sought to encourage Betty. She reached his side and tore the bridle from the limb, then leaped with one bound into the saddle. But in that very instant she felt a hand clutch her skirt. With a bitter cry she bowed her head. Had she lost, after all? Not so, thought Hector. With a slight plunge he moved forward, his feet at the same time flying into the air. His heels caught the Indian full upon the breast, and there was one less to give trouble.

Feeling herself freed from the Indian's grasp, and keeping her seat, despite Hector's use of his heels as an agency of death, Betty grasped the reins more firmly, and gave the pony the word to go. But he needed not the bidding; already he was off like an arrow shot from a bow. Betty was a fearless horsewoman. Though she was unaccustomed to this style of saddle, yet she kept her seat firmly.

The fate of the first pursuer to overtake her had not discouraged the others. She could hear them plunging after her; their cries of rage, mingled with uncanny war-whoops, made the blood grow cold within her. Some had mounted their ponies; she caught the sound of their hoof-beats following Hector, and how near it seemed! Truly the race was to the swift, and it was a race that meant life or death. Could Hector win? The faith was in her heart that he could, and that he would! She urged him by calls, by whistles, and by all the endearing names that could give joy and brave purpose to a pony's heart.

Straight before her lay the path. She knew it well now. There was but one point where she would have to slacken Hector, and that was at the somewhat sharp turn leading to the bridge over the creek. Already it was in view. Soon Hector's swift hoofs would clatter

across its timber. But by how many lengths ahead of the pursuers would it be? She dared not think.

It was no haphazard quest on which Betty rode thus for life or death. She knew the spot where the soldiers had encamped, for she had listened intently to the messenger as he had located it. It was in a grove of moss-draped live oaks, just beyond Master Schenking's.

On flew Hector, seeming scarcely to touch the earth. He was over the bridge now, and going like the wind along the well-beaten track.

Betty listened with strained ears for the thuds upon the bridge of the hoofs of the pursuing ponies, and her heart gave a sudden leap as the sounds came painfully close upon those of Hector. Were the Indians gaining upon her? As though in answer to the question a shout of derision, then a yell of triumph greeted her. Quickly following them an arrow came speeding by, its mate keeping it close company. Each all but grazed her clothing.

But even in the midst of this peril, the brave girl lost not her nerve, nor did she abate in one jot the effort to outdistance her pursuers. Already half the distance had been covered. At the end of the other mile lay the camp, the soldiers, and rescue, that is, if they had not already gone! But was the victory of that

mile to be given Betty? She bent low in the saddle, her face almost upon Hector's mane, and again words of endearment, of encouragement poured from her lips.

A shower of arrows came. She felt a sudden tremor pass through Hector, and perceptibly his pace slackened. Then she realized that he had been hit. A cry of anguish escaped her. Had the brave fellow received his death wound, and was all over for them both? More and more evident grew the slackening pace. It was as though he staggered now. She could hear his labored breathing. Oh, it was cruel to remain longer upon him! She would relieve him of her weight and let him lie down and die as easily as he could. It was all over now both for herself and for him. She realized it. Each had made brave struggle, and they had lost!

But in that very moment, when the triumphant shouts of the Indians sounded in her ears, and she was about to slip from Hector to meet as bravely as she could the doom that seemed so near, other sounds reached her ears. They were the mingled cries of defiance and of encouragement, and the discharge of fire-arms. She looked up quickly. Soldiers in uniforms with red mountings were surrounding her, and

the Indians were fleeing. She needed not a second look to tell her that it was the troop from Charles Town, and at its head rode gallant Captain Barker himself. She knew him well, for he had twice been to Dorchester, and each time he had accepted the hospitality of her father's roof.

"Mistress Elizabeth Blew!" he exclaimed. "Is it really you, young mistress? And what was the strait that drove you forth to speed for life with the red fiends so close in pursuit?"

As quickly as she could with clearness she told him of the peril of those within the church.

"Can it be possible?" he cried. "Then the Indians have fooled us, indeed, and have approached from entirely a different direction. Fortunate it was for you, young mistress, the most fortunate for the others, that I had just received intelligence which caused me to change my course somewhat."

Betty fully agreed with him, while her lips spoke the grateful words with which her heart was swelling.

Captain Barker rapidly gave his orders. The troop was to hasten with all speed to the church, Betty riding near the rear, and behind one of the soldiers. It had been found that Hector was painfully, but not seriously injured. The point of an arrow had torn its way

through the fleshy part of his flank, causing much loss of blood, which had weakened him. While Betty had been talking to Captain Barker two of the soldiers had succeeded in stanching the flow of blood. It was decided to leave the pony fastened in a thicket, and to send and fetch him as soon as the danger at the church was over.

The troop rode forward at a rapid pace. It was well that they did. The Indians, learning through those who had pursued Betty that the soldiers were near at hand, hurled themselves with renewed force upon the church. As the ammunition of the besieged was now nearly exhausted, but little could be done to repulse them. They were swarming all around the building and several were upon the roof as gallant Captain Barker, at the head of his troop, dashed into the clearing.

It took but a short while for the trained soldiers with good muskets and a sufficiency of ammunition to rout the Indians. To make the punishment more complete, they set off after the fleeing savages, dealing death as they went; nor did they halt till the Indians were well out of the settlement.

CHAPTER XXII

THE HIDDEN MADE MANIFEST

As Betty, having dropped through the small opening, regained her feet, and dashed toward Hector, a sharp cry rang through the church. It came from Charles, who had been stationed at the porthole in the gallery just above the little room.

The lad sprang away from the porthole and made a rush for the gallery stairs. His mad intent was to follow his sister at all hazards. But firm hands caught and held him.

“What is it, lad?” asked Captain Gabriel. “Have you gone daft?”

“’Tis Betty, sir,” almost gasped Charles. “She has let herself through the little window in the minister’s room and gone to summon the Governor’s troop. I know that is her intent. Oh, sir, ’tis a rash deed, and those red fiends will surely overtake and kill her. Hear them now, sir, how they are yelling! Do let me go, uncle. I must help her! I must follow her!”

“Betty!” echoed Captain Gabriel, and he, too,

almost gasped the name. "Betty gone to summon the Governor's troop! Lad, you must be out of your mind!"

"Nay, sir, truly I am not. I saw her with mine own eyes. And hear you not those yells as the red demons pursue her? I think her intent was to reach Hector. Pray heaven she did so. Oh, uncle, do not hold me. Every moment is precious."

Captain Gabriel himself was filled with excitement now. Betty gone! Betty, their dear lass, at the mercy of the Indians, perhaps already slain by them! Oh, it surely must be a horrible dream on Charles' part. Yet as he came hastily to the minister's room, there was the open window to give proof to the lad's words. And the Captain came none too soon to close it, for the Indians, having discovered it, were about to launch inflammable material through it, hoping to set the church on fire. The Captain's swift fingers sent the iron plate speeding to its fastening, and that danger was averted.

The story of Betty's daring act, of the perilous ride to bring them rescue, was soon known to every one in the church. Varied were the emotions with which it was received. Astonishment, admiration, grief in turn filled their hearts.

It was a terrible half hour indeed to those who loved her—that between the time of Betty's escape from the church and that at which Captain Barker and his gallant troop dashed into the clearing. Tears and prayers were intermingled. They knew not if she were living or dead. It was more likely that the red fiends had overtaken and slain her, for how could she hope to win in a ride so desperate as this?

Great was their rejoicing to welcome the live Betty back again, and not only a living, breathing Betty, but a Betty wholly unhurt. She was almost smothered by their caresses, while, modest lass that she was, her cheeks were burning at the praise heaped upon her. Anon her eyes glistened as some aged hand was placed in blessing on her head.

"Oh, my lass, my lass!" sobbed her mother, holding her close, "how could you risk your life so, dearie? What would safety have been to us purchased at such a terrible price?"

"'Tis so like our Betty," declared Aunt Joan, as she fondled the bright head, "that I, for one, am not surprised."

"Though 'twas rash of you, my Betty," spoke Captain Gabriel, "and you should not have risked your life thus, yet I must say, lass," and now the Captain's

eyes, too, were speaking, "'twas a glorious deed. Few men would have had the nerve for it."

"Don't say that, uncle," cried Charles. "'Twas proven plainly enough that no man here could, or at least would do it. It was only our Bess who could and did. Oh, Bess, to think the one hero of our family is a girl!"

"We are willing it should be that way," declared Edward, all his heart in his eyes as he looked at his sister.

As to Charles, he was midway between laughter and tears. It was so good to have Betty back again after that awful danger, a real live sister, whose marvelous deed of courage every one was praising.

"You silly lad!" exclaimed Betty, as she pinched his cheek.

"Oh, dear ones," she continued, "you are making too much of that which I was enabled to do. 'Tis true I am only a young lass, but there are others here who would have done just the same thing had they thought of it, as I did."

"Nay, say not so," spoke Anne quickly, as she wound her arm with a tighter pressure about Betty, and laid her tear-stained cheek again with fond caress against her cousin's; "there's no lass but you, Bess,

who would have done it. And to think you did it to save us from death! risked your life for ours!"

Mr. Blew said little; his heart was too full for words. To think it was his own lass who had done this wondrous deed, his Betty whom all were praising!

"Father's lass!" he said again and again, as he kept his arm about her. He had his turn at last. He had waited patiently for it, and he was not quick to let her go.

Though his eyes had brightened and his cheeks had flushed with pride and happiness as he clasped her in his arms, yet Betty noticed after a short time how pale and harassed her father looked. It was the old trouble weighing upon him, she felt assured. He had not come willingly to the services this Sabbath. His desire had been to remain at home. He felt keenly the threatened disgrace. His accounts were questioned! He must appear before the Council! Until he was cleared, how could he hold up his head again among his neighbors? And how was he to be cleared, unless the receipt could be found? Oh, the sorrow and shame for wife and children if he should never be cleared!

In the excitement and terror of the Indian attack Betty, too, had for the time lost sight of the dark cloud

of trouble that seemed gathering so steadily about them. When one stood so near to death, what were earthly affairs, after all? But now that danger had for a time departed and the tide of life had come flowing back with its accustomed vigor, so, too, had returned the cares and perplexities of life, its joys and its sorrows.

Betty longed to speak comforting words to her father, but she could not here with so many near who might overhear her. All she could do was to press his hand silently, but with a fondness he understood. How she longed to tell him of her contemplated visit to the Governor! but Captain Gabriel had warned her not to do it. He was afraid Mr. Blew would oppose it.

The people were now beginning to leave the church. They were going away in little groups, each with two or three riflemen to keep an eye upon the forest strip along the way. The band of Indians had no doubt been driven far away by the soldiers, but a few might still be lurking in ambush.

The church building presented a somewhat dismantled appearance, for several of the pews had been torn up so as to barricade the doors, for it was believed from the first that the Indians would seek to force the doors. Near the northeast door the Blew

and Roddey pews had suffered the most. The former had been entirely robbed of its seats.

"'Tis time we were departing," said Aunt Joan suddenly, as she looked about her. "See! the most of our neighbors are gone."

"Wait, aunt, please," said Betty. "I have left my pelisse in the pew."

Her aunt smiled.

"There's no pew now, darling. They robbed us of it for the barricade. But now I recall you will find what you seek hanging upon the partition."

Betty walked quickly toward the dismantled pew. Several of the windows had been opened so that the church-goers could see how to gather up their effects. Truly had those who sought to defend the church robbed the Blew pew. Every seat had been taken out; only the partitions remained.

The cloak Betty sought was hanging on the dividing wall between the Blew pew and that of Master Hall in front of it. As Betty's eyes swept the floor of the pew she noted the confusion. The wolf-skin bags had hastily been torn from the seats. The little benches on which Daniel and Drusilla sat were overturned. Her mother's Psalm Book lay upon the floor, partly open. Betty stooped to pick it up. As she did so

something much lighter in shade than the dark binding of the book attracted her attention. She thought at first that it was a detached leaf, but a second glance showed her that it was too long and too narrow for that.

Betty's heart began to beat faster. She could not understand the swiftness with which her hand darted toward the paper, but in a moment she understood.

There was just one little gasping cry, then Betty's shoulders stiffened and she stood firmly. Firmly, too, she began to walk toward the little family group still awaiting her. Captain Gabriel, Edward, Caroline, Charles, and Anne had turned away and were by this time out of the building, but her father, mother, and Aunt Joan were lingering for Betty.

Yes, Betty went toward them firmly, but how her face shone! It was as though two stars had come together in each of her eyes.

"Father," said Betty, and now her voice quivered—she could not control that as she could her feet—"Father, the morning we were on our way to clean up the churchyard we met our good Elder Pratt. He stopped to talk pleasantly to us, and, as is his wont, to leave a word of counsel and of admonition. The text he read us that morning has never left my mind.

Day and night has it haunted me. Oh, father, somehow I felt that what the Good Book said would come true. It has been like a star of hope in my heart along all the dark way. And see! father, mother, Aunt Joan, oh, you dear, *dear* ones! it *has* proven true. The lost has come to light! That which was hidden has been made manifest."

"Betty," gasped Mr. Blew, "you don't mean——"

"Yes, you dear, precious father, I do mean every word of it. Oh, daddy, 'tis all right at last! Hold up that blessed head of yours just as high as you please. There's no tongue can do you harm now. Here is the receipt good Master Portman gave you on that Sabbath weeks ago. You must have placed it on the seat in the pew, and it slipped between that and the partition. See! 'tis the paper without doubt."

It was true. There before their eyes, held between Betty's quivering fingers, was the long-lost receipt!

Mr. Blew reached for it with trembling hand. No sooner had his gaze rested fully upon it than his head went up. It was as though the weight of years rolled from his shoulders. His wife and Mrs. Joan May were clinging to him and sobbing for pure joy. As to Betty, she was half hysterical with happiness.

"To think I was firm in the opinion that Master

Pettibone had taken it from you, father," said Betty at length. "Well, he is wicked enough to have done it, and that I knew. But he can do you no more harm now, father, and methinks that when the Governor learns of his meanness, as my Uncle Gabriel and I have fully resolved he shall do, there'll be a revoking of Master Pettibone's commission as supervisor."

That was just what Governor Nathaniel Johnson did—not only took from Master Pettibone his papers of authority, but bestowed a scathing rebuke. Shortly afterward Master Pettibone left the colony, to the joy of many, but to none more so than to the family of Mistress Betty Blew, our spirited Lass of Dorchester.

THE END

